

ANTILLEN REVIEW

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Recent political
developments

Aruba's container
terminal

Bonaire's historical
heritage endangered

250th Anniversary
of Synagogue

Town and country
planning

Caribbean migration
to the Netherlands

Economic survey



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Where will imminent
changes lead

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FROM THE EDITOR

A basic maxim of journalism is to present the truth under all circumstances. This may in times of crisis and uncertainty lead to seemingly negative reporting. It is certainly not AR's intention to offer its readers an unnecessarily gloomy picture of the country's state of affairs. But the truth must be told. The Antilles stand at the crossroads and no clear vision concerning the future has hitherto manifested itself. That in itself is most worrisome. For in order to rise above the problems besetting a society at any time, there should be developed concepts and ideas translating the crisis into a challenge.

But that truth as one perceives it can be written is a priceless good. Freedom of the press gives to the people the opportunity to be informed and arrive at its own conclusions. There should be no shadow of doubt that this democratic right is fully honoured in the Netherlands Antilles.

The fact that some political parties, unable to stand criticism, have stopped advertising in some of the media does not basically infringe on that right. Nor is this the case when such a party holds power and refuses critical media government advertizing. What is does show is a potentially dangerous and undemocratic attitude. It also points in the direction of mismanaging the taxpayer's money. But the press can still write what must be said. The recent protest of the Interamerican Press Association accusing the Aruban government of obstructing the freedom of the press is therefore not justified.

The national picture may be gloomy but AR does not want to join in with this unwarranted outcry. On the contrary the fact that democracy is still the country's way of life, does offer a glimmer of hope.

CONTENTS

NATIONAL		WINDWARD ISLANDS		TOURISM	
Where will imminent changes lead	5	Promising projects	21	Quo Vadis?	39
Troubled waters	7	SPECIAL FEATURE		COMMUNITY	
ARUBA		250th anniversary of synagoge	24	Volunteers battle cancer	41
Container terminal	11	Memoir for future ages	27	SOCIOLOGY	
Development bank		FINANCE		Caribbean migration to the Netherlands	43
BONAIRE		Economic survey	31	BOOKS	
Neglect and greed	15	LAW		Looking back in anger	45
CURAÇAO		Town an country planning	35	BIBLIOGRAPHY	46
Drydock — progress report	17	PEOPLE	37		



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Where will imminent changes lead

Rarely has the country been faced with such a barrage of fundamental problems. Even the colloquial saying that on these islands all troubles are eventually carried away with the trade-winds offers little comfort. Worse, such words sound unforgivably superficial in face of the complex issues the country is confronted with.

Ostensibly the 'Aruba question' ranks number One on the list. It grounded the Government as well as all attempts to form a new cabinet. Few expect the upcoming and generally unwanted elections to bring new openings. (see following story). And if this political deadlock is not already damaging enough — all decision-making processes are grinding to a halt — observers are increasingly worried about the purposely sweeping up of emotions by politicians for votegetting motives, causing an irrational polarization between the peoples of Aruba and Curaçao.

One hopeful moment presented itself during the past two months when three Antillean members of the Committee of Seven, installed to consider the feasibility of Aruban independence and the consequences thereof for the other islands, stopped Holland in its manipulative tracks. Chairman Mr. Barend Biesheuvel, a former Dutch prime-minister, giving a rather broad interpretation to the committee's charge, submitted three proposals about the future status of the other five islands to be put on the agenda as well. The representatives of Bonaire, Curaçao and the Windward Islands, sensing that Holland intended to use the Aruba question as a lever to push at least also Curaçao into independence, objected in the strongest terms possible. After a flurry of messages between The Hague and Willemstad, Holland backed down. The committee is expected to meet again later this month (April). But whether it will be able to do any constructive work, is very much the question. Election times do not seem conducive to deliberations of this nature.

Dutch development aid in the meantime has trickled

down to a virtual standstill. The negative trend of the Dutch economy is one reason. Some, however, suspect that The Hague is trying to exert political pressure by means of holding up the assistance programmes. Labour intensive industries, in particular the construction sector, may soon have to lay off considerable numbers. A bleak perspective for those islands already confronted with a high unemployment figure.

Also during the first quarter of the year the country was rocked by a bitter debate about educational policies. A first draft of an indigeneous approach was distributed in order to engender a general discussion. A paragraph which suggested changing the constitution in order to stop financing denominational schools caused an uproar. (The constitution prescribes equal treatment for all types of education). The Roman Catholic School Board in particular protested strongly, which in turn drew heavy criticism from the Teacher's Union, two bodies that have been at loggerheads for some time. The coverage given by the media to the ensuing 'war' between the

two parties unintentionally diverted the public's attention from what is really at stake here: a basic democratic right. There can be little doubt that the particular proposal is marxist inspired. Nor should there be any doubt that this is but one of several strategies presently being employed to turn the country to the left. Aware of the public's strong aversion of anything that reeks of communism, the extreme progressives have clearly decided on a long term policy.

Developments in the region seem to be on their side. Reason the more for the political leaders to state clearly where they stand in the upcoming period of election campaigning. For in whatever constitutional constellation the islands are to continue, their populations and their closest friends abroad will want to know whether democracy will prevail.



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The Netherlands Antilles in troubled waters

AN ANALYSIS OF THE CAUSES UNDERLYING THE FAILURE TO FORM A NEW CABINET

by E. Wilsoe

What was feared by the majority of the people of the four insular territories, together forming the Netherlands Antilles, has become a reality. Much to their dislike they are forced to give in to the whims, personal interests, puerility and incapability of the politicians. Having gone through two months of uncertainty about the possibility to form a new cabinet and facing three months of political campaigning, dominated no doubt by personal attacks, emotional slogans and unrealistic promises, they will have to cast their ballots on June 25th in a mood of despondency.

Preliminaries I

After a thorough round of consultations with the leaders of the respective political parties, his Excellency the Governor of the Netherlands Antilles, Mr. Ben Leito, requested Mr. J. C. Eisdén of Curaçao's MAN and Mr. P. Bislip of Aruba's MEP to investigate the possibilities to form a cabinet, which would be assured of a 2/3 majority in parliament (De Staten), or if this should prove impossible at least a straight majority. This request was made, as the Governor was aware that only a rapprochement between the two largest parties in the country, the MAN and the MEP, would make it possible to steer the ship of state into calmer waters.

But common sense was not to prevail over opportunism, hunger for political power and narrow-minded insular thinking. From the very start of their inquiry Mr. Eisdén and Mr. Bislip were put under heavy pressure by their own parties and by the opposition, all of them eager to attract as many votes

as possible, if it would come to general elections. During the ensuing consultations held by the two "informateurs" it soon became evident that most of the social partners and parties sustaining the parliament were not in favour of early elections. The MAN and the MEP were initially in favour of a national cabinet. Their former coalition party, the Democratic Party of Curaçao, indicated that although it would not join such a



photo by F. Sulvaran

Courageous stand

cabinet, it was willing to suffer such a solution. However, conditions put forward by the MEP wrecked the initiative. The failure to solve the conflicting points of view between the MEP and the former coalition partners, all of which concern the future status of the Netherlands Antilles in general and Aruba's movement towards independence in particular, brought the country to a point, where not only the formation of a cabinet has proven to be impossible, but which must also be rated extremely problematic even after general elections. Deeply disappointed Eisdén and Bislip declared

the political life of the country to have arrived at its lowest ebb possible. On February 22nd they informed the Governor that they saw no sense in continuing their efforts.

Preliminaries II

Subsequently three new initiatives developed.

Aware of the fact that hardly anybody in the country favoured elections and convinced that such a step would not bring a solution of the socio-economic and political problems any nearer, the Governor informed Prime Minister Martina of his intention to hold the Eisdén and Bislip report for further consideration. This in fact meant another round of consultations with the political leaders. This time the Governor, giving an unprecedented interpretation to his constitutional position, took the lead himself. A courageous stand, which showed a proper sense for the political realities of the moment. In particular because he went all out to convince MEP's leader, Betico Croes, of the necessity of finding some kind of solution, without which all preparatory talks about the future status of Aruba would be halted. Elections, he argued, would slow down the work of the Committee of Seven (see AR vol. 2 no. 2) and eventually cause the next Round Table Conference with Holland to be postponed, thereby leaving the position of Aruba undecided for another indefinite period of time. The Governor's approach offered Mr. Croes an opening to co-operate without losing face in Aruba. As a result the country would be granted the stability needed ►

to tackle the serious questions it faces. But it was all of no avail. Petty motives and political narrow-mindedness had the upper hand. Don Martina, leader of the largest party in the country (MAN), informed the Governor that he was fed up with the postillion d'amour between the latter's palace and Aruba, thereby grounding the effort. The other political parties both in Aruba and Curaçao followed suit, claiming that too much importance was being given to Mr. Croes!

Governor Leito may have stretched his constitutional posi-



photo by F. Sulvaran

Bisliip: disappointed

tion a bit far, his attempt to let common sense prevail is praiseworthy.

Chamber of Commerce

A second initiative was taken by the Curaçao Chamber of Commerce. They invited the five leading political parties on the island for a round table session in order to arrive at closed ranks with regard to the Aruban question. The first meeting of the Committee of Seven having run into serious problems on the issue of defining its precise task, and the relationship between Aruba and Curaçao having further deteriorated as a result, the Chamber (and most of Curaçao) felt that a firm and united stand was urgently required.

The attempt did not even survive the first session. The opposition parties accused the MAN and DP of hypocrisy. When the time was ripe for such a united front last September, it was argued, both parties had preferred a second Cabinet Martina (whithout the MEP) for purely opportunistic reasons. Although the Chamber deserves praise for its initiative, it must be remarked that the preparations were too scanty. No clear concept of the purpose and limitations of such a united position was offered. As all parties were already gearing themselves for possible elections, the air was loaded with suspicion. This atmosphere of mistrust was not exactly conducive to a positive solution. Consequently the attempt failed.

Trade Unions

A third initiative developed from the side of the Trade Unions. They invited the political parties to formulate their position with regard to the political crisis and explain the motives guiding their stand. Those parties not represented in the Staten (they are represented in the island council though) had little to say. Understandably they opted for early elections. As a result all attention focused on the MAN, DP and NVP-U, all three holding seats in parliament. MAN declared to be willing to support whatever majority could be arrived

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at. The D.P., sensing the hidden agenda of what was going on, quickly let it be known that if a coalition of parties needed its support to secure a majority backing in parliament, it would not spoil the game. Thus the ultimate decision was left to the NVP-U, which understandably felt cheated. After all it was not the opposition that had caused the crisis, and now they were saddled with the responsibility of success or failure! Moreover, they had let it be known prior to the meeting not to favour a political solution, but rather general elections. Nevertheless after internal deliberations they agreed to support a cabinet as intended. At the next meeting the Democratic Party failed to appear, thereby bringing also this initiative to nought. In retrospect this was to be expected. The game played had been too obvious. Each of the trade unions involved has bindings with one political party or another. Because of this there is distrust even among themselves. Seeing the positions already taken up by the DP and the NVP-U prior to the meeting the intention of the dominant group of trade unions was virtually giving an advice to the electorate to vote for the MAN, as the two other parties had shown unwillingness to co-operate toward a solution. However, the DP-sympathizers in the trade unions warned DP-leader Bikker, an experienced politician, who reacted quickly and changed his party's original position. Likewise the turnabout of the



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NVP-U was occasioned by warnings received from the trade union pro that party. These about-faces may have surprised the innocent observer, but certainly not those who are familiar with the Antillean corridors of power.

By official decree dated March 12nd, 1982, it was determined that in face of the proven inability to form a workable coalition cabinet, general elections will be held on June 25th, 1982.

Postscript I

In 1975 the trade unions advised their members to vote for Frente. In 1977 the unions issued a veiled advice in favour of the D.P. In 1979 they expressed their favour for MAN.

To offer an advice in 1982 would be utterly wrong, because:

- 1) like in the past years such an advice will be based on emotional motives;
- 2) it will not be the result of a comparison of the respective programmes and lists of candidates;
- 3) it constitutes an insult to union members who are obviously not regarded capable enough to make their own choice.

Postscript II

Political parties intending to participate in the elections without a programme offering a solution or at least an indication thereto for the constitutional problems, unemployment question and educational issues and cannot present to the public a list of personalities capable of implementing such policies, must be harshly denounced.

Postscript III

The expected participation in the elections of some eight political parties in Curaçao alone will only cause a further weakening of Curaçao's position.

Postscript IV

The confusing political scene will cause a further growth of apathy



Eisden: lowest ebb

photo by F. Suwiran

The most that can happen in Aruba is that the MEP may loose its absolute majority. Possible shifts on the smaller islands will be of no influence with regard to the formation of a government. The country is indeed in troubled waters.

Editor's note

Although praise is due to both the Chamber of Commerce and the Trade Unions in Curaçao for their initiatives to find a solution for the current political crisis, it cannot be denied that these initiatives at times came close to pressure, especially on the part of the trade unions. The question must therefore be raised, if these attempts by the social partners to ward off elections in the face of the existing odds do not form a danger for the democratic process. If they had met with success, a welcome precedent would have been created for less bona-fide groups in the future. AR is of opinion that too little attention has hitherto been given to this aspect. ■

Postscript V

A considerable shift of the electorate can only occur in Curaçao.

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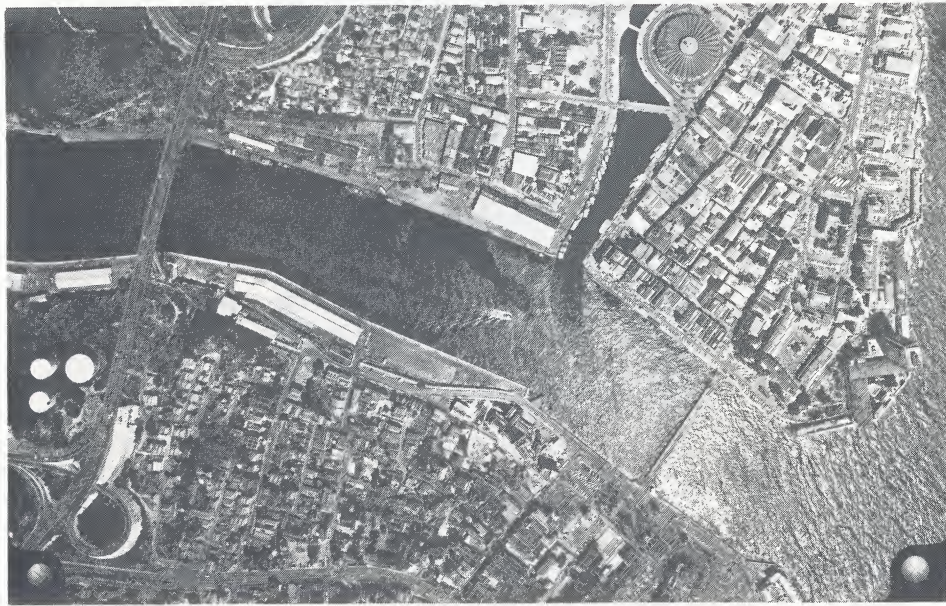
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Container terminal

operational in 1983

progress report

The timing appears to be perfect. Experts predict that within two years the west coast of South America, the last trading area to be fully containerized, will have adopted this most modern method of handling cargo. By then Aruba's container terminal now under construction will be ready to offer the market its services. At the same time competition, in particular in the Southern Caribbean, seems to be diminishing because of continuing political instability and organizational inability. Thus Aruba's chances to seize a fair share of the trade look quite hopeful. That is if it can solve the problems connected with reorganizing the harbour structure in time. Much will depend on whether both the Island Government and the Trade Unions will be able and willing to display the open-mindedness necessary to arrive at new functional ways of organizing the port's activities. Taking into account the unique assistance Aruba is receiving from Holland, both financially and technically, one would expect this question to be redundant. Unfortunately it is not.

Trend

The containerization of South America is accelerating rapidly,

says Mr. Chris van Krimpen, director of Aruba's Port Authority. He mentions Brasil as a trend-setter. Experiments with the containeri-

zation of traditional South American exports such as coffee and cotton have been quite successful. Consequently shipping lines both in Brasil and Europe are in the process of introducing the required types of container vessels. Lloyd Brasileiro for example has embarked on an extensive 18 months modernization programme converting six ITA-type vessels into full containerships. Representatives of several members of the European-S. Pacific, Magellan Conference (ESPM) reached agreement last summer on the required specifications for fully cellular ships to be introduced on the South America route by 1984. Accordingly the Brazilian government is planning to upgrade container handling. Santos, which already handles nearly 70% of all Brazil's containerized cargo, will soon be able to start using its US\$ 19 million government funded deepsea container facility. Plans are being developed to construct specialized terminals at the ports of Santos, Rio, Salvador and Recife. Also ►



the go-ahead was given early last year by the Brazilian government for a new US\$ 2 billion mine, railway and deepwater port scheme at Carajas in northern Brazil.

Much the same is happening all over the continent. Colombia, to take another example, is also speeding up its move into widespread containerization. Again efforts to ship traditional commodities such as coffee and cotton are at the bottom of this development. Flota Mercante Grancolombiana, the country's national shipping line, has been experimenting with the shipment of coffee to Europe in standard 20-foot containers. The Harrison Line of the U.K. has been doing the same with cotton bales, another of Colombia's major exports. To meet this growing trend towards containerization of traditional exports, Flota Mercante has ordered six new semi-containerized vessels for delivery between 1982 and 1985. To upgrade shore facilities the World Bank has been helping to finance a comprehensive study of Colombia's ports and future needs. Giving special attention to container

facilities, the study looked at the possibility of building new terminals at Buenaventura and two of the three major ports on the Atlantic coast, Cartagena, Baranquilla and Santa Marta.

Competition.

The above indicated development will balance incoming and outgoing container traffic to the west coast of South America and as a consequence stimulate further containerization. This will also imply excellent opportunities for Caribbean ports to function profitably as transit harbours. Just over a year ago initiatives taken in the region pointed at the possibility of fierce competition (see AR. Vol 1, No 3). But since then the picture has changed slightly, thereby boosting Aruba's chances.

Mr. van Krimpen points out that the two major requirements for a successful harbour operation are first class service and political stability. In a quick review of the region's developments he notes that Miami and Puerto Rico are doing very well in this respect. Jamaica,

now that political stability has been restored, may continue its initially successful approach. But St. Lucia, which promised to become one of the largest terminals in the region, is falling back, according to van Krimpen, because of continuing political instability. And Port of Spain (Trinidad), he continues "is a downright disaster. Plenty facilities but a chaotic organization". This leaves Aruba (and also Curaçao, which started construction of a terminal a year after Aruba) without any real competition in the Southern Caribbean.

Progress

Expectations are that the Aruba terminal will be operational by the middle of 1983. Due to the unexpected discovery of an old pier under water the construction activities are running two months behind schedule. Which, according to van Krimpen, points at very good project-timing.

The dynamic director explains that the project involves much more than the building of a container terminal. "The philosophy

Table 1: Container throughput of ports of the world, by area, 1970-79 (TEU x 1.000).

Area	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979
Japan (excluding Kobe)	286	382	550	807	1 068	965	1 136	1 349	1 514	1 514
Kobe	90	139	368	693	839	905	1 245	1 360	1 445	1 304
Sub-total	376	521	918	1 500	1 907	1 807	2 381	2 709	2 959	2 818
Hong Kong	36	51	180	474	726	802	1 029	1 259	1 226	1 304
Other south-east Asia	6	9	50	188	254	404	608	745	1 063	1 420
Sub-total	42	60	230	662	980	1 206	1 637	2 004	2 289	2 724
Taiwan	80	113	137	297	389	471	656	750	1 046	1 340
South Korea	25	50	75	100	175	189	377	499	555	684
Sub-total	105	163	212	397	564	660	1 033	1 249	1 601	2 024
Far East sub-total	523	744	1 360	2 559	3 736	5 051	5 962	6 849	7 566	
Australia	324	384	485	638	709	765	771	875	906	1 070
New Zealand	0	4	26	49	70	72	86	167	221	248
Sub-total	324	388	511	687	779	837	847	1 042	1 127	1 318
Africa	0	0	0	0	46	144	248	373	697	917
Latin America	10	10	21	79	92	157	205	334	537	666
Indian sub-continent	0	0	0	0	8	8	10	11	20	96
Red Sea/Persian Gulf	0	0	0	0	0	0	161	483	914	1 198
Sub-total	10	10	21	79	146	309	624	1 201	2 168	2 877
Total	857	1 142	1 892	3 325	4 376	4 882	6 532	8 205	10 144	11 761
North America	3 292	3 757	4 953	6 089	6 714	6 994	7 713	7 958	8 901	9 226
Europe	2 922	3 433	4 295	5 522	6 144	6 073	7 048	7 986	9 313	10 481
Grand total	7 071	8 332	11 140	14 936	17 234	17 949	21 293	24 149	28 358	31 468

behind what we are doing here in Aruba is that one should look at the harbour as one entity. We have therefore taken into account the port facilities, tug-boat services, navigational aspects like buoys etc. The planned container terminal should be an integral part of the totality of port activities".

"A part", van Krimpen continues, "that will certainly render a deficit during the first year". But this obviously does not worry him. Says van Krimpen: "the unique manner in which the Netherlands are contributing to this project gives us the necessary financial leeway. The total costs of the project are now estimated at Naf. 50 million, only half of which Aruba will have to supply. In fact Holland has lent Aruba the money at a 2½% interest rate, while no payments need to be made during the first eight years. According to van Krimpen, this puts Aruba in an advantageous position, as charges can be kept at a competitive level during the first period of operation.

Problems

Reporting on the construction and market prospects Mr. van Krimpen sounds optimistic. But his tone changes considerably however, when he speaks about the structural and organizational problems presently being encountered.

In order to eliminate as much as possible the disadvantages of a small scale situation, like prones to patronizing, it was decided to give to Aruba's Port Authority the structure of a limited liability company. But apparently the Aruban politicians have difficulty getting used to sharing some of their power. Van Krimpen, however, is of the opinion that decentralizing the decision making process is essential. To continue concentrating all power in the Island Government will most certainly slow down productivity. Political infighting never produces the kind of efficiency needed to run a port profitably. On the contrary, van Krimpen maintains. He feels that there should be a greater willingness to accept ideas and advices from outside. In this respect he mentions the danger of overdoing the so-

called Antilleanization. A heavy price may be paid with regard to quality, he warns. For the same reason he objects to the appointment of an Aruban counterpart alongside himself. The chances that such an appointment might be politically motivated are too great. His suggestions is to allow three people to compete for the position over a certain length of time. Such an approach would most certainly guarantee the best man for the job. A more specific problem the Aruba Port Authority is facing concerns the transfer of personnel from government service to the company structure. Conditions in the civil service offer employees, as everywhere, a high level of security. The intended transfer will imply a different and much more private way of insuring them against illness and old age. Reason why the trade union has already been demanding a 20% wage increase. But complying with such a demand would mean the creation of a 'a super civil service'. Too wide a gap would develop between this group of semi civil servants and the rest of Aruba's labour force.

Van Krimpen estimates that it will take at least 2 to 3 years to solve these problems.

Attitude

What worries van Krimpen most is

the lack of insight into the true nature of a port. In particular on the part of the authorities and trade unions. He points out that the harbour of Aruba is in shambles simply because of mismanagement. Some people have made a fortune, but the island itself has received little revenue out of the port activities. "In fact", he states, "we had to start from zero".

Aruba, however, is receiving more than just financial help from the Netherlands. The European Container Terminal (ECT) of Rotterdam has made an advisory steering group available to accompany the project. Members of the group visit Aruba regularly. Moreover through van Krimpen himself Aruba can draw on a worldwide reservoir of know-how. It is certainly not by chance that the technical committees and the board of the International Association of Ports and Harbours (IAPH) will meet on Aruba next May. The question is, however; whether Aruba will be willing to learn and to realize that the port development makes them very much a member of an international community. It is that attitude of openmindedness van Krimpen is pleading for. And no doubt much of the success of the project will hinge on that question. ■

Containerization International febr. 1981

Latin America (including the Caribbean, but not Puerto Rico) handled 666,000TEU in 1979, up from 92,000TEU in 1974. Growth has thus evolved at 48.5% annually over the five succeeding years. This compares with an annual rate of 82% in Africa since 1974. In 1979 the Caribbean handled 46% of the boxes moving to/from Latin America, with Kingston, Jamaica, taking over half of the 304,000TEU. On the mainland Santos, which achieved annual growth of 21% since 1974 (Kingston's rate was 50%), looks like being overtaken by Buenos Aires, which doubled its 1978 throughput to reach 50,000TEU in 1979.

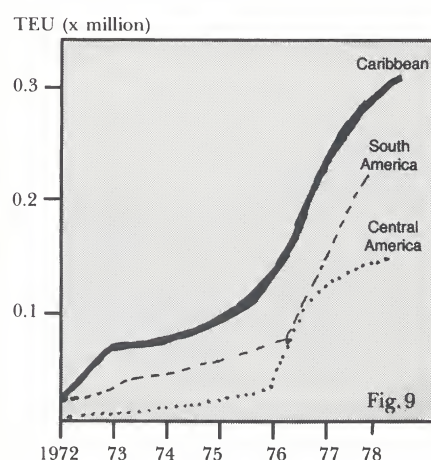


Fig. 9 (above right) indicates the relative growth in container traffic in the three areas that make up Latin America (Puerto Rico has been excluded from the Caribbean).

Development bank soon to open its doors



photo by F. Suvaran

E. de Kort

Only a few weeks ago a first draft of the articles of incorporation of the soon to be established Development Bank was approved unanimously by the Island Council. Commented the commissioner of Finance, Ephraim de Kort, "We now expect the bank to start operations as from June the 1st, 1982. "A rather important development in a society where up to now only short term money has been available. The express purpose of the Development Bank is to supply long term loans for projects stimulating Aruba's development. In fact no loans for a period of less than two years will be granted. A maximum on the other hand has not been decreed.

In deciding what projects will be

eligible for financial assistance the trustees of the Bank will be led by certain criteria. Preference will be given to projects in the industrial, tourism and agricultural sector, and in that order. Two projects are already being studied for approval. One concerns a Sea Aquarium and the other the extension of an experimental Aloe plantation. According to De Kort the aquarium project is in such an advanced stage that the Island Government has decided to grant a loan immediately, which can be taken over by the Development Bank as soon as it becomes operative.

The bank's nominal capital according to the articles of incorporation will amount to Naf. 20 million.

The Island Government being the sole shareholder, will provide the required 10%. This should cause no problem, as Aruba has a positive balance of 70 million, which is expected to grow to close to 200 million during the current year.

Appointed as the Bank's first director is prof. Frederick Flynn from Canada, who has been involved in several similar projects in the Caribbean. No decision has yet been taken about the appointment of an Aruban counterpart. Although mr. De Kort received special training in Colombia for this express purpose, his subsequent acceptance of the post of commissioner rules this out, at least for the time-being. ■

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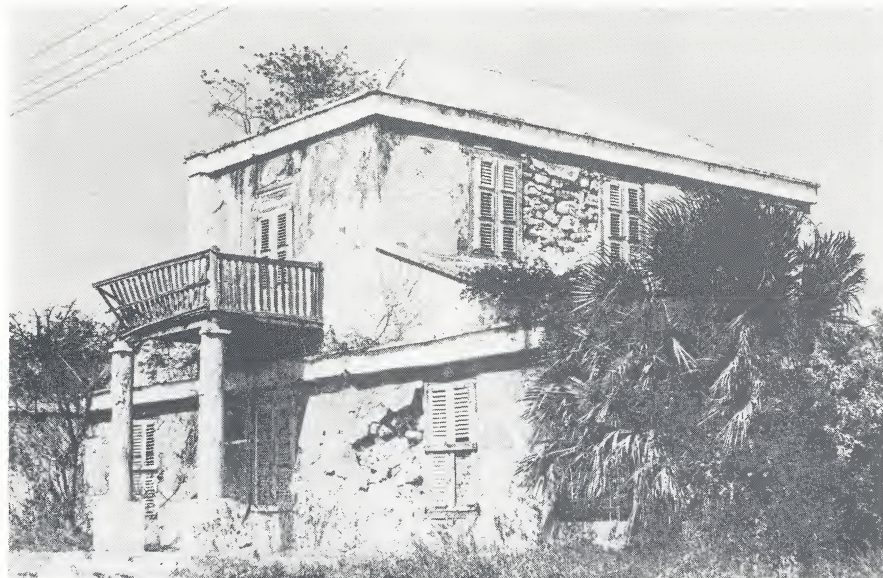
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Neglect and Greed

Endanger future and past



Decay at waterfront

foudation (Plan D-2) sent the owner of the demolished house in the Breedestraat very feasible proposals for restoration, which would also make the property economically viable. He never considered them seriously. Erecting a new building or selling space ready for construction is obviously more profitable, never mind the historical and social value of the buildings. A short-sighted approach as these particular houses are an essential part of the texture of the village. Without them Kralendijk will lose much of its particular charm for tourists.

Photo by R. Snow

Waterfront

Kralendijk (dyke of corals) has much to offer, its most outstanding feature being its waterfront. Says architect G. A. Abad: "I know of no comparable situation in all of the Caribbean, certainly not in the Netherlands Antilles. Bonaire is really unique in that it is the only island with such a long shore on which people can build their houses right to the edge of the water". An extra attractiveness is added by the fact that the shore stretches out for miles in a semi-circle thus granting a view of other parts of the coastline from any given point. Consequently Kralendijk was built as a typical waterfront village. Abad and his colleagues of the Foundation Plan D-2 have forwarded the government a masterplan for the development of the waterfront in its totality. ▶

The modern traveller descending upon Bonaire will still find much of what enchanted the visitor's eye a hundred years ago. Change has come slowly, time being even today a bountiful commodity on the island. But this may not last much longer. Some fear that within ten years little will be left of what links Bonaire to its past. Much of its typical architecture, which is as friendly and easy-going as the islanders themselves, is about to disappear. A development which may also imply a loss of future chances with regard to attracting tourism. Neglect of a surprisingly rich heritage and desire for quick profits by means of speculation are threatening to deprive the island of both its past and future.

Demolition

It had all the makings of a surprise attack in wartime. Suddenly a demolition team arrived at a site in the 'Breedestraat' and before anyone realized what was happening the walls of the small, old and ever so picturesque house were crumbling down. Across the street some early customers of a local bar looked on in horror and began to collect signatures in a well-meant but futile attempt to stop the work of destruction. The hurriedly alerted president of the Foundation for Preservation of Historical Monuments called upon the Lieutenant Governor to intervene. Neither of them had been in-

formed beforehand and their action came too late. Within a few hours Bonaire had suffered an irrevocable loss.

Unless decisive action is taken soon, this story will repeat itself in one way or another in the near future. Apart from several decaying beauties in the country side at least three larger houses of distinct historical value in the centre of Kralendijk, the main village on the island, must be counted as written off. The owners are letting them fall to ruin for reasons of real estate speculation. No one, notably the government, seems to be able or willing to stop them. As early as 1976 a non-profit architectural

Ruin on boulevard



Photo by R. Snow

This would include safeguarding the historical heritage, creating harmony between these monuments and the modern requirements of for example the harbour activities. Putting to maximum use the attractive aspects of the waterfront with regard to tourism and regulating in a functional way both recreational and commercial traffic.

Mr. Abad points out that because such a planning has been non-existent several activities like shops and restaurants, which should for all purposes be situated at the boulevard, are now scattered land-inwards. Leaving the potentiality of the waterfront unused, he warns, may well result in a loosing of interest by cruise-ship companies. For although one can hardly imagine a more advantageous place for ships to moor — right near the centre of the village — once people disembark they are offered few recreational possibilities on the spot.

A negative side-effect of the development of restoration and renewal plans is that those who own the afore mentioned houses of historical value are holding on to their property expecting its value to increase as time goes by. Says Mr. Alfred Knuf, president of the Foundation for Preservation of Historical Monuments of Bonaire, "time is against us. As the years go by less and less is left".

On the one hand prices have rocketed sky-high, making it impossible for the Foundation to acquire the monuments for restoration purposes. On the other hand Government takes so long to decide whether it will buy the properties and use them for office space after restoration, as suggested by the Foundation, that one must expect more irrevocable losses. It should be noted that the masterplan produced by Plan D-2, an initial lay-

out of which was presented to the Bonairean Government on the 12th of May 1981, has not been responded to as yet! Neglect even more than greed seems to be the real cause of Bonaire's predicament.

There are, however, a few positive developments which should not be left unmentioned. Some private companies are envisaging the restoration of one of the oldest houses near the waterfront and the construction of a number of new ones in different authentic styles. Comments Abad: "If they succeed it would be a stimulating example of what can be done in both a culturally and economically viable way". The initiators of this project prefer to keep a low profile and first show Bonaire that they really mean business in the best sense of the word before going public. An attitude which does raise hope that not all is lost. ■



photo by R. Snow

Curaçao Drydock

A competitive and dynamic operation

by Frank Mc. Manus

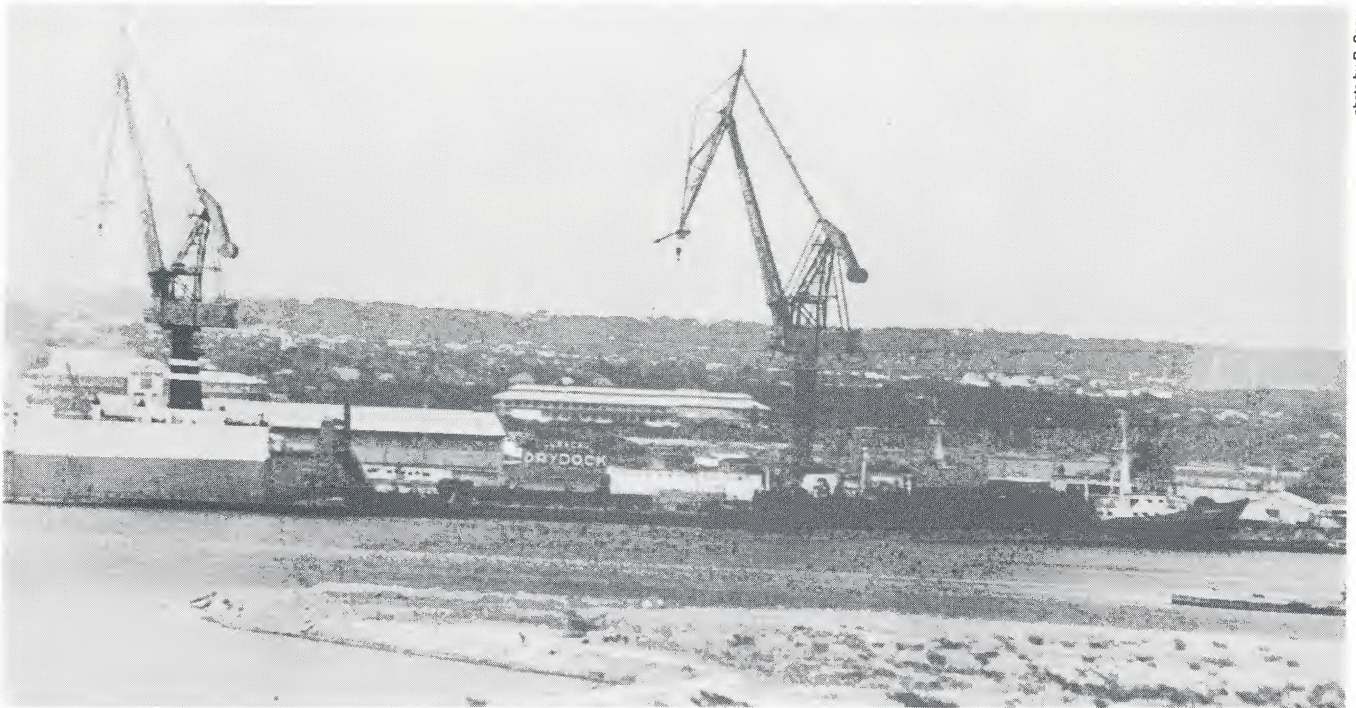


photo by R. Snow

“Operating a ship repair yard . . . it’s like running a hospital and a hotel,” says Lucas R. Fabriek, Commercial Manager of CDM. “You are there because you are needed, but you still have to keep the beds full.”

The ‘beds’ are among the world’s largest, for CDM stands for Curaçaosche Dok Maatschappij, or Curaçao Drydock. Its huge Antilia Graving Dock is the largest in the Western Hemisphere and it can accommodate ships up to 150,000 deadweight tons.

Largest

The large drydocks of Curaçao lie on an island in the Schottegat, a vast and beautiful natural harbour which is the heart of this part of the Netherlands Antilles. Big oil tankers traverse the St. Anna Baai

channel from the swelling Caribbean, past the old city of Willemstad and its famous swinging bridge, to and from the sprawling Shell Refinery, which established in 1916 is still the fifth largest oil refinery in the world.

Curaçoa is the world’s fifth biggest port in terms of tonnage handled. Rotterdam is the world’s first port in this regard.

At CDM travelling cranes which can lift 75 tons reach up into the Caribbean sky like prehistoric monsters. Mobile truck cranes capable of 140 tons are also available. Below, skilled engineers, technicians and workmen move purposefully about their jobs aboard ships, on the docks, alongside and in the many workshops. Over 1,000 ships of all types and sizes are serviced by CDM each year.

“We can handle just about anything that floats in this business,” says Fabriek, “and we have handled a good many that had stopped floating as well.”

Curaçao lives from the sea. Five miles west of the Schottegat at Bullenbay is the Curaçao Oil Terminal, the largest in the Western Hemisphere. Further south are the oil storage and bunker facilities of Caracasbay. Sleek cruise ships bring thousands of visitors each year to the duty-free shops and attractions of Willemstad, while a constant stream of freighters and rectangular container ships give increased emphasis to the fact that Curazoleños are a nation of traders. From many points in the city, ships in the St. Anna Baai channel appear to be sailing down the main street. ▶



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Figures

CDM is the second largest employer in Curaçao. It has a work force of 1,200 continuously employed men and women. The company operates a training school for craftsmen and artisans, which annually turns out over 300 men in upgraded and initial skills at various levels for all the relevant crafts and trades. It has access to over 100 sub-contractors in all phases of maintenance, repair and construction.

The Antilia graving dock is 918 feet long, 157 feet wide and can take vessels up to 150,000 tons with a depth of water of 27 feet at the entrance and 19 feet at the dock-head. The Beatrix dock is 633 feet long and 85 feet wide and accepts vessels of up to 20 feet 6 inches in draught.

CDM' shops are equally spacious with heavy and light machine shops of some 20,000 square feet each and a separate pipe-fitting shop of 21,500 square feet. Often the lights burn all night at CDM for jobs that demand 24-hour a day attention for completion.

The Curaçao Drydock is a very competitive operation and tries to keep its charges below the going rates in yards in the U.S., South America and the Caribbean. At present an important portion of CDM occupancy consists of vessels from North America as well as other flag vessels operating out of American ports.

Miami-connection

Fabriek states that CDM will go after an even larger part of this business and it also has an eye on the increasing numbers of off-shore equipment, supply vessels, work boats and inter-island freighters that are plying the waters between North and South America. Recently, it completed a big maintenance and repair job on an off-shore drilling rig.

"The importance of Miami as a financial, communication and transportation link to South America becomes more obvious every day," says Fabriek. "Miami bills itself as the Gateway to Latin America and Curaçao is admirably located to serve vessels in this growing trade."

"Traditionally, a large number of these ships went back to North America for repairs. One of our tasks is to inform these ships owners that we have capabilities for maintenance and repair that rival any in the world and that our prices are very competitive."

An important part of the services is what Fabriek calls parallel facilities. As a major shipping and trading centre, Curaçao has superb communication and transportation networks. Seven major airlines with direct daily flights to Europe, North and South America and the Caribbean are scheduled from its modern airport. An excellent system and liaison with custom services allows for high speed delivery of spare parts from port and airport to the yard. CDM has representatives in 22 maritime centres around the world. Telex and telephone service is first-rate and as a tourist centre the island provides a wide range of hotel accommodation.

Expansion

"CDM's facilities have undergone considerable expansion in the last decade," states Fabriek. "We are in a constant process of modernization of the yard and its equipment."

New facilities to replace the Koningin Wilhelmina dock are in preparation and should be operative in 1982-83. In addition, an 80,000 ton deadweight graving dock is in the planning stages. The new facilities are expected to give CDM an even larger share of repair business which has traditionally returned to Gulf and east coast ports.

New harbour projects in Curaçao

are likely to require expanded CDM services. These include a container terminal under construction in the eastern part of the Schottegat to be completed in 1983 and a \$ 14 million ship-breaking yard in the western sector, which is due to start construction this year. The ship-breaking venture is a joint-venture between the government and West Germany's Eisen und Metal A.G. The new container terminals — a second will be built in Aruba — have been budgeted at \$ 65 million and are backed by the Port of Rotterdam and Europe Container Terminus B.V. (ECT).

Competent

Historically, Curaçao's marine maintenance and repair services date back to 1635, when four merchant seamen of the Dutch West India Company first used space at the naval yard at Parera. Over the centuries, this service has grown into the island's second largest industry. In 1959, the yard became known as the Curaçaosche Dok Maatschappij.

"Selecting a shipyard for the maintenance, repair or conversion of a vessel requires the evaluation of many factors — major considerations are technical capability and physical capacity," says J. B. Roggeband, Managing Director of CDM. "Curaçao Drydock offers the know-how and skill of a long established ship repair centre in combination with the most modern facilities and equipment.

"We believe the presence of these yards are contributing to the exciting economic growth of maritime trade in the Caribbean. The increase in number of vessels of all sizes that are being repaired at CDM each year is proof that our company is fulfilling the need for a reliable and competent repair facility in this part of the world," Roggeband concludes. ■

(This article was reprinted from Caribbean Shipping Magazine with the author's consent)



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SABA

Climbing the steep path up Mount Scenery on Saba has long been a challenge to visiting tourists. Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands is reported to have set a near record when ascending the more than one thousand steps leading to the summit. Soon, however, the muscle straining trip can be shortened considerably by driving up a new road circling the mountain almost halfway to the top. But the costly construction (estimates run well over Naf. 3 million) is obviously not undertaken to bring the magnificent view from the summit



Photo by R. Snow

within easier reach of vacationers. The number of tourists visiting the island does not warrant such a venture. Mr. Eric Johnson, a well-known personality in the Saban community, explains: "the reason is twofold. First of all the new road will open up fertile land on the mountainside. Secondly, the project does provide employment for quite a number of men.

Now that the first 800 metres long stretch has been completed, the area called 'rendez-vous', which is most suitable for horticulture, has come into close reach. An experi-

mental gardening project in the village of Windward Side should provide the islanders with information what product will yield the best results. Soon construction will start on the other side of the mountain near "Hell's Gate", working its way towards the stretch already finished and opening up land suitable for agriculture. Says Mr. Johnson: "the idea is to prepare the island for bad times. Thanks to this project we should in the near future be able to grow enough for own immediate needs".

But there is still another side to the story. According to the former administrator of the island, Mr. Sleswijk, the enactment of legal measures enabling the authorities to expropriate the hitherto unused land is lagging dangerously. He and others fear that clever entrepreneurs may use the opportunity to start housing projects alongside the new road. They will no doubt have little trouble finding customers, as most sites offer a magnificent view. Instead of serving the island community, the Dutch development aid from which the road construction is financed would then in fact only enrich a 'happy' few.



Photo by R. Snow

Old Gin House

St. EUSTATIUS

'From hamburger-stand to one of the most charming hotels in the Caribbean' would be a good choice of title for St. Eustatius' latest story. When John May and Martin Scofield started their small fast-food business on Statia's beach 12 years ago maybe only those two creative and tenacious men envisaged what today has become a reality: a lovely 18th century West-Indian style hotel acclaimed by the Philadelphia Inquirer as one of the 32 top inns in the world. And what is more, during the course of this year expansion of 'The Old Gin House' will be started creating in the end a small village in colonial fashion. A project which will cost approximately Naf. 6 million.

What John and Martin found upon arriving at the site in 1970 ►

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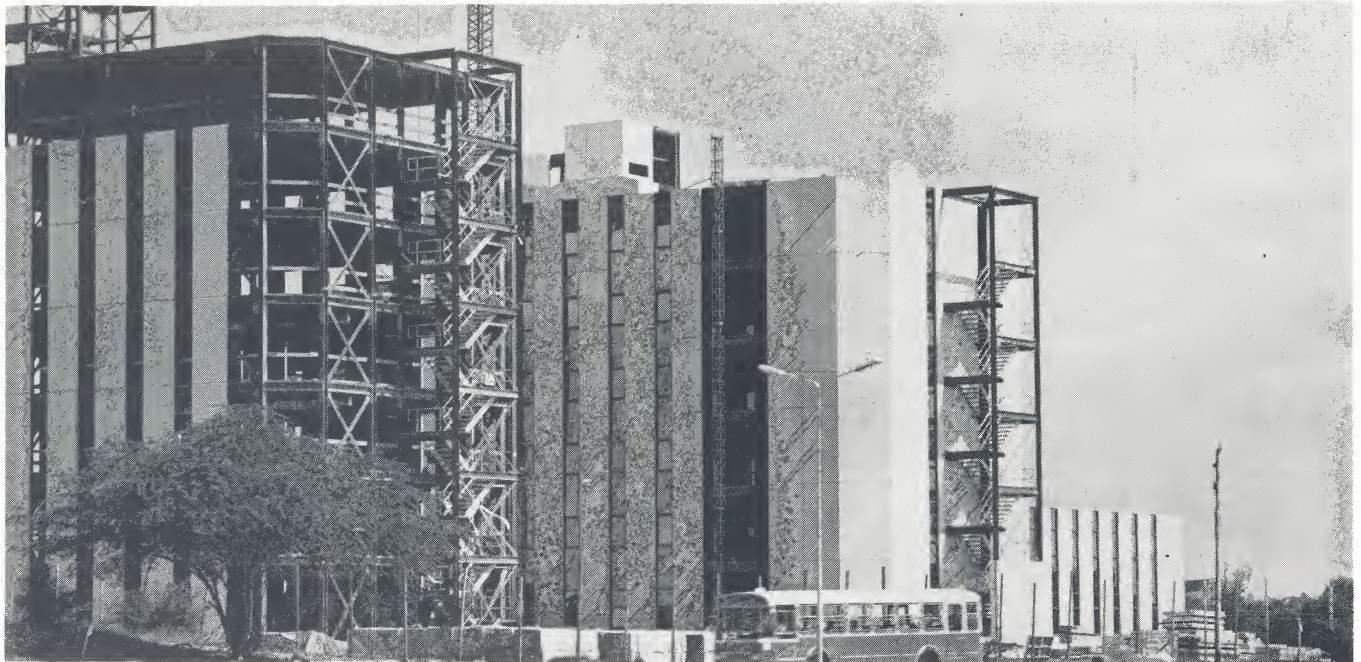
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Martin Scofield

was little more than a handful of ruins. Realizing, however, that what sets St. Eustatius apart is exactly its historical past, they set out to restore step by step The Old Gin House, a 18th century warehouse, and some of the surrounding buildings. Says John May "we felt that we had to capitalize on what makes the island different. It may not have been a most lucrative undertaking, but it has certainly given us a lot of creative satisfaction. Their example has, no doubt, contributed much toward the general revival of the island, which until recently seemed to do little else than dream of its glorious past.

The hotel presently counts twenty rooms. Not enough, obviously, to guarantee a viable operation, even though the occupancy rates during the season are quite satisfactory: 85% in January and February of this year. An extension to 60 rooms, as planned, is urgently required. The high rate of repeat visits and the fact that most guests come from a well-to-do professional background, warrant the success of the project. Apart from renovating the existing rooms, changing some into suites much in demand by European travelers, 15

photo by R. Snow

— 20 cottages will be built grouped around gardens and swimming pool facilities. Not only will this set-up provide visitors with a maximum of privacy, it also creates an indirect financial reserve. Should, contrary to all expectations, an appropriate average occupancy not be reached, then some of the cottages could be sold as vacation houses and leased back to the hotel for use during certain periods of the year. Although the implied prudence seems applaudable, a professional feasibility study shows that such fears need not be harboured. That is if all the recommendations of that study are applied. These concern matters like marketing and airline accessibility. Due to the small scale situation promotional campaigns will have to be part of an all island effort. Until now the local government has done little to nothing in this respect. A project, which will be presented to the EEC for funding, has been drawn up recently.

A serious drawback for St. Eustatius' tourism is the limited size of its airport. An enlargement of the runway making straight flights from places like Pto. Rico possible instead of being completely dependent

on the St. Maarten connection, is another recommendation of the afore mentioned study.

Funding for this part of the project is again expected to be supplied by the EEC.

This integral approach, in which the National and Island Governments, the Foundation Investment Promotion Neth. Antilles (STINA) and the owners co-operate, does seem to hold every promise for the future. Reason why John and Martin are planning to do more than just increase the number of rooms. Tennis courts, a miniature golf and a gaming room equipped with computerized roulette and black jack tables are some of the new features that will be introduced. These will be only an added attraction on top of the hospitable atmosphere, excellent service and not in the least the exquisite cuisine, which have made a stay at John and Martin's Old Gin House a unique experience. ■



John May

photo by R. Snow

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Curaçao celebrates 250th anniversary of synagogue

A message for jews and gentiles

The occasion was of a truly historic nature. Re-telling the 331 year old story of freedom — a story symbolized by the magnificent synagogue in the heart of Willemstad, Curaçao — meant not only calling to mind the turbulent and dark middle ages, the persecutions of the Jews and their wanderings to the New World, but also formulated if not in precise words then by implication a message for the future. For freedom to be oneself, regardless of creed or race, is as embattled as ever in this modern world. It will only survive if people keep reminding themselves in a profound and thorough manner of the struggles, sufferings and small but ever so meaningful victories of the past. True to Jewish tradition the commemoration of the oldest synagogue in continuous use in the Western Hemisphere, was used to recount a rare story of tolerance and freedom.

Service

Fittingly the most impressive moment of the five days festivities was the service of commemoration in the synagogue itself on Sabbath-eve, March 19th. The splendour of the well-kept building — a major restoration took place in 1974 — was amply matched by the spirit of solemn joy and deep gratefulness which permeated the liturgical proceedings. Indicated Rabbi Aaron Peller in his sermon 'a building of this nature however well constructed and maintained is of no value unless filled with the Spirit of God'. That night he had no reason to complain.

Hundreds of guests from abroad and from the island itself joined his congregation in a most meaningful act, a celebration of freedom. This specific character was accentuated by the reading of a congratulatory telegram from Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands. All present were reminded of the endeavours of the House of Oranje to ensure freedom of worship for the sephardic Jews from Portugal, the forefathers of the Jewish commu-



photo by F. Silverman

nity in Curaçao. It is noteworthy that the Curaçao congregation Mikvé Israel Emanuel says a prayer for the House of Oranje every sabbath. A unique phenomenon in Jewish liturgy, which goes back almost 400 years!

Economic

Most of the other festivities, certainly if measured by intensity, were spent recalling and analyzing the period of expulsion first from Spain and then from Portugal, in fact from most West-European

countries, the subsequent years of reacceptance in some North European countries and settlement in the Western Hemisphere.

During an academic symposium on Sunday, March 21, Prof. dr. Yosef Yerushalmi of Columbia University, New York, reminded his audience that by the year 1500 all European countries had closed their doors for Jews. This drove many of them to the East, where they were granted a certain measure of freedom in Poland, Bohemia and the Ottoman Empire. The subsequent need of Western Europe to trade with the Levant set into motion a tentative beginning of a reverse trend. The Jews came in handy for this purpose, as many of them had settled in the Eastern Mediterranean as merchants. "The answer to the question what rendered the undesirable Jews suddenly desirable", according to Prof. Yerushalmi, "is clearly economic"!

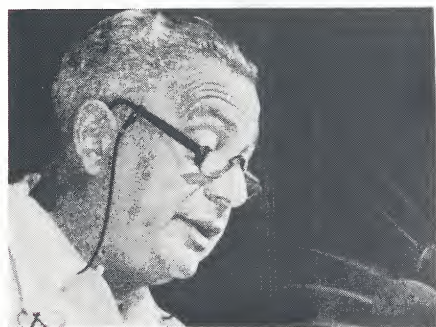
A myth of Jewish power sprang up, which the Jews were careful not to deny, and which was seemingly backed up by the decline of Spain and Portugal after these countries expelled the Jews.

Charters

As can be read from the accompanying story (page 26) this economic motive played an important role in the decision of the Burgher Fathers of Amsterdam to allow the first Jews to settle in their city (1583). But there was more, ►

said Yerushalmi. The Dutch and the Jews shared a common experience of suffering at the hand of Spain. And it was this and the liberal attitude of the Dutch that composed an early and positive answer to the question raised all over Western Europe 'whether the Jews would be allowed to dwell amongst christians and on what conditions'. "In the context of that question", Yerushalmi pointed out, "the history of the Jews in the Caribbean and Curaçao in particular is of 'superlative interest'".

Citing charters with regard to the first settlements of Jews in Recife (Brasil), Surinam and Guyana — all Dutch colonies around the middle of the 17th century — stating



R. J. Zwi Werblowsky

that "no difference should be made of lesser or greater degree between them (Jews) and our own citizens", Yerushalmi went on to point out that in Curaçao the Jews were given burgher-rights even before this happened in Amsterdam and almost a century before the British granted the same in their colonies!

Rogues

Besides highlighting the remarkable freedom granted to the Jews on Curaçao, attention was also given during the Symposium to the spritual and communal relations between the Portuguese (Jewish) communities of Amsterdam and Curaçao. Prof. dr. Yosef Kaplan (University of Jerusalem) reminded his audience of the isolation in which the Sephardic communities had lived during the great dispersion of the 15th and 16th centuries. Once the above mentioned reverse trend set in, communities in the West of

Europe had to overcome a generations long detachment. Strong ties with the congregation of Amsterdam, often called the Jerusalem of the North, did much to shape the spiritual life of the Jews in Curaçao. Although it is apparently customary for Sephardic Jews to recount their history in glorious tones, it should in relation to the foregoing be noted that one of the present leaders of the Mikvé Israel, mr. Charles Gomes Casseres, spoke of his early fore-fathers on the island 'as a bunch of rogues'. An honest appraisal of history he was applauded for.

Trade

The close contact the Jewish communities kept during the ages both with regard to spiritual and commercial matters, was touched upon by Prof. dr. R. J. Zwi Werblowsky (University of Jerusalem) and Prof. dr. Daniel Swetschinski (University of Arizona, Tuscon) respectively. The latter, having noticed some disappointment about his choice of theme, said how on the night before his lecture he had dreamed of Marc Anthony and had answered him "yes, commerce is an honourable trade"! A statement slightly exaggerated with regard to some of the practices of the Jewish and Dutch merchants during the first century of their settlement on Curaçao, which in those days functioned as a slave repository. Moreover much trade in those days directed from and through Curaçao was in contraband. The contribution the Jewish community has made and is still making to the island in an economic sense, however, should not for one moment be underrated. Not only have the Curaçao Jews made the island their home, they have in relation to their small numbers done much for the community, of which — it should be underlined — they regard themselves rightly an integral part. A contribution moreover which should not only be rated in economic but certainly also in cultural terms.

Challenge

The symposium itself proves the



Yosef Yerushalmi

last point. The scholarly quality of the lectures and discussions was a rare and precious gift to the island, which for reasons of its small scale and geography is seriously handicapped in this respect. In connection with this it is interesting to recall the warning Prof. Werblowski, speaking on the origin of the Sephardim's name and their liturgical customs, sounded. At the end of his lecture he expressed his concern about an apparent loss of substance amongst the Sephardim. During an ensuing panel discussion he stated: 'pride in our tradition should be knowledgeable'. "But", he continued, "very few if any of our young bright people are willing to devote themselves to the study of Judaism'.

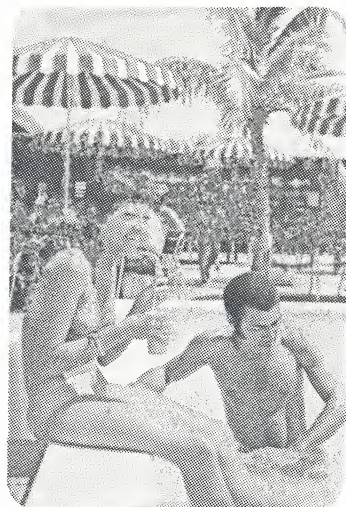
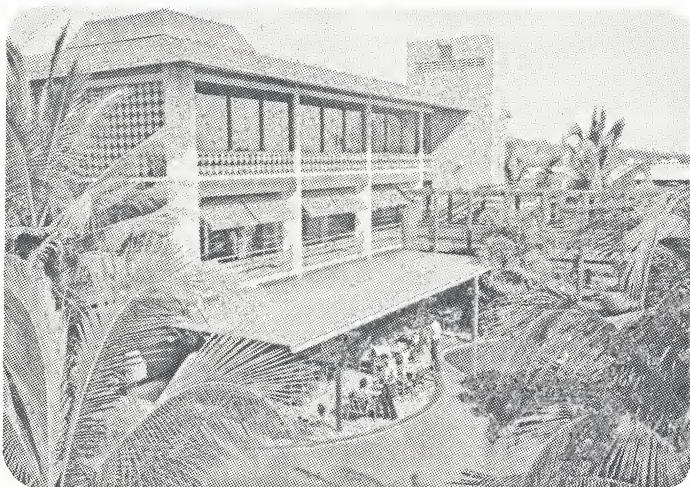
A remark, as subscribed by the other speakers, which obviously does not only apply to the Jewish world. There is a general dis-inclination noticeable amongst the younger generation to occupy themselves with the study of the basic values of human life.

The celebration of the 250th anniversary of the Curaçao Snoa was splendid. As are the Delft-blue plates of the Synagogue, the book 'our Snoa' and the stamps issued on the occasion. But most splendid of all was the testimony of the principles of liberty and tolerance already demonstrated in Curaçao at the time the building was erected. The question remains whether the Curaçaoenes, Jews and Gentiles alike, will have the spiritual backbone and sufficient knowledgeable pride in their history to uphold that basic principle of freedom, which so marks the history of the island. The celebrations of the Jewish community certainly translated that question into a challenge. ■

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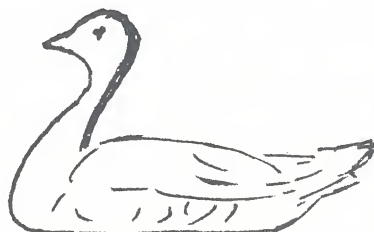
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A Memoir for future ages



The illustrious gentlemen, the learned Haham, R. MOSSEH URY A LEVY, (of blessed memory) and his son R. AHARON URY A LEVY, my father and Master; both had been residents of Emden, in the province of Oost-Friesland, where over the door of their house they had put the inscription

אמת ושלום ימוד העולם,
meaning Truth and Peace are the foundations of the World; and underneath the translation thereof in the Latin language.

It happened that in the year 5364 (Sept. 1603, 1604) two ships arrived from Spain in said city, (to be sure forced by the elements) bringing ten Jews from Spain and four male children, they were laden with merchandise, such as furniture and household goods they brought along with them, together amounting to a considerable fortune; and on going ashore some of those Jewish passengers from the ships, they saw a slaughtered Duck being brought to the house of my Grandfather; they noted the inscription which was in Hebrew, and which they could not read; then those Merchants went to an inn and told the innkeeper that they wanted to eat Duck that day; the innkeeper went to buy it and upon entering my Grandfather's house he saw there a very fat Duck, beheaded and laid upon a table, and trying to buy that Duck, he told that some rich merchants had arrived from Spain who had a great desire to eat a fat Duck; my Grandfather declined by saying that that Duck he had ordered slaughtered for himself, but the innkeeper making repeated appeals to sell it to him, my Grandfather finally gave him the Duck

NARRATIVE
of the coming of the
SPANISH JEWS
to
AMSTERDAM

According to the true tradition, that was handed down to URY DE AHARON A LEVY by his forebears and which he published to the world in the year 5471 (1711). Now translated into our sacred language, printed and published by MOSSEH LEVY MADURO in Amsterdam through the Typographical Services of G. J. Janson of the firm of I. MONDOVY, in the year 5528 (1768) translated from the original Portuguese by Charles Gomes Casseres, November 11, 1980.

on the condition that the innkeeper would give him another live Duck as well-fed as this one; the innkeeper went home very happy with the Duck and presenting it to the Jewish guests, they exclaimed that it was so fat that they would not be able to eat it all, then when asked where he had bought it, the innkeeper answered: from the Jew; whereupon they said (with great wonderment), by good fortune there are Jews

here! there are Hebrews here! and the Christian answered yes, and that they have over their door an inscription in Hebrew.

Two of those Passengers went the next day to the house of my Grandfather (may God keep him) and speaking Spanish to him he could not understand them, so he called his son AHARON (who was my father glory to his soul) to speak to them; they told him they wanted to speak in private to him; they then went into a small room where they declared to my Father that they had arrived there with two Ships from Spain, that they were Ten Merchants in all and four male Children, and that they wanted to be circumcised since they were children of Israel; to which my Father replied that such could not be performed in this city, inasmuch as all were Lutherans, that followed the religion of Luther, but that he would show them a Painting that he had in his house, whereon was painted the city of Amsterdam, and that he would show them on said Painting a Tower called Monkelbaans-Toren: and that when they arrived in said city, they should rent a house on Jonkerstraat, in front of said Tower mentioned above, and that they should make a sketch so as to be able to recognize and find the house, and that in two or three weeks time he would join them. So they went to Amsterdam and rented a house as he told them, in front of the Tower, which Tower the Portuguese still call the Tower of AHARON; and so my Grandfather and my father (may God keep him) went to Amsterdam to visit those Gentlemen and they found them in the street he had indicated to them; and they rejoiced ▶

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greatly when they saw them, and they circumcised all the Ten Men and the four Boys, and they rented a room where they said their Prayers, every day, with great devotion and the fear of the Lord.

A few weeks later their Christian neighbours went to report to the law enforcement authorities that people from Spain were living here and that they had themselves circumcised by two Jews that came from abroad, and that they said prayers every day in a separate room. When the Burgomasters heard that, they gave orders to imprison my Grandfather and my Father and such was carried out, and after having been in prison for a few days they were brought before the Burgomasters and they were asked: Who gave them the authority to start here a new religion of Jews, and to circumcise those people that had arrived from Spain? You are people that should be put to death. My elders then told the Burgomasters that it is true that they had done all that, but that it was for the benefit and profit of this city of Amsterdam, to permit her to enter into great Business.

That they could very well have done what they did in other places, that wanted to give us complete Freedom, but we did it to enable this city to embark upon great maritime Business, because these people from Spain have brought great Fortunes and Riches with them, and that if the honourable gentlemen would consent to give these people from Spain the Liberty to live here freely, we assure the gentlemen Burgomasters that within one Year your Graces will have here more than fifty Firms of the Spanish and Portuguese Nations with great Fortunes and this city of Amsterdam would then become the leader of all other cities of Europe in matters of Commerce (as Amsterdam had little Commerce up till then). When the Burgomasters heard that from my Grandfather and Father they asked. Where are these people? And they answered in the house where your Graces sent to take us prisoners. They were then called before the Burgomasters and

when they saw these people from Spain in front of them, that could speak only in Spanish or Latin, so they started to talk Latin to them, and interrogated them and found out the truth, just as my elders had told them; that in a short time if they were given that freedom, they would see many leading firms of Spain and Portugal establish themselves here with great fortunes. And when the Burgomasters heard this they were greatly pleased and let us go.

After this the Gentlemen called my Grandfather and Father (may God keep them) and told them: we agree with what you said about these people from Spain, and that is why we have resolved to give you all the Freedom in the World to live here, and to follow your own Law and your Religion openly, and to have your own House of Worship; when they heard that my elders greatly thanked the Gentlemen Burgomasters and they went home in great spirits and brought those good tidings to the Jews of Spain, who thereupon embraced them and cried in joy praising the blessed God for his mercy towards them. They so wrote to Spain and

Portugal about the Liberty the Gentlemen Burgomasters of Amsterdam had given to them, following which many firms of Spain and Portugal came to establish themselves in this city, and my Grandfather became their Haham and my Father their Hazzan, and their circumcisers and they became the founders of this K.K. (Holy Congregation). He arranged their Prayers, and he gave them Ascamoth (constitution and By-Laws) to be governed by in the observance of the Precepts of the blessed God, who in his mercy will enlarge them forever, AMEN.

And when Jews from Germany and Poland heard that Jews from Spain and Portugal were living here, they too came to live here and were admitted by the authorities until this very day. The Lord be praised for his manifold mercies towards us and may the time come soon that our MASSIAH will arrive, AMEN.

Amsterdam, 10th of Kislev in the year 5471 (1711) URY DE AHARON A LEVY, son of the learned H. H. R. MOSSEH URY A LEVY, Founder of this Holy Congregation that the Lord may augment for many years AMEN. ■

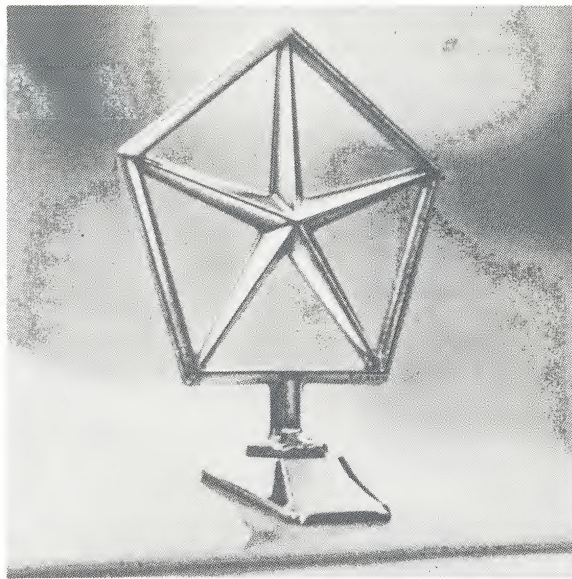


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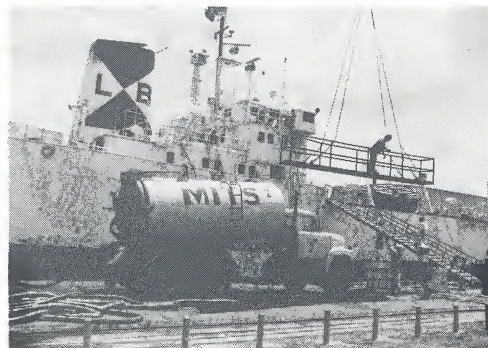
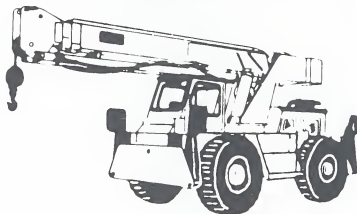
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Economic survey

by H. C. Beers

Foreign reserves continued to stay at the high level reached during the second half of 1982. At the end of February 1981 the surplus on the balance of payments amounted to about f. 120 million on an annual basis. Part of the reserves shifted from the Central Bank to the private banking system to enable the banks to invest their ample funds abroad. The funds resulted from high domestic spending during the December season.

Imports of merchandise during 1981 probably dropped as a result of an appreciation of the Antillean guilder against the European currencies. The value of goods imported from Europe decreased in value, whereas the value of goods from the U.S.A. showed the expected growth.

Foreign reserves

The level of foreign reserves did not change much during January 1982. Per December 31, 1981 an amount of f. 300,7 million was held by the Central Bank and the private banking system. During January total foreign reserves grew by f. 2,1 million to f. 302,8 million. However, the composition changed considerably. The amount held by the Central Bank fell from f. 244,3 million to f. 207,6 million, whereas the private banks recorded a growth from f. 56,4 million to f. 95,2 million. The development illustrates the high liquidity position of the private banks, which were able to invest abroad the money received from their clients as a result of the December sales.

The Central Bank showed an increase of its foreign reserves to f. 233 million at the end of February. The figures for the private banks were not yet available, but on February 19th they held a total amount of 86,6 million, which is substantially more than the average amount during 1981.

On an annual basis foreign reserves surged to f. 118 million at the end of January and to about f. 120 million at the end of February 1982.

Balance of payments

The balance of payments for 1981 showed a record high surplus of f. 96,1 million. However, detailed figures are not yet available. The Central Bank only published a provisional survey for the first three quarters which is published in table 1.

A remarkable aspect is the drop in merchandise imports of f. 23,6 million. The appreciation of the Antillean Guilder against the European currencies may account for this change. The average value of the Antillean Guilder during the period January/September 1981 increased by almost 28% compared with the corresponding period of 1980. Imports of European merchandise amounted up to f. 31,3 million or 11% less than the same period of 1980. The value of imports from the U.S.A. grew, so the net decrease of total imports is

not the result of domestic stagnation but due to the appreciation of the U.S. dollar and the Antillean Guilder.

The transfers by the oil refineries increased by f. 81 million to f. 286,3 million owing to profit tax payments in July. Domestic consumption of oil grew in this period from f. 178,7 million to f. 209,9 million.

Monetary Developments

In November 1981 the government decided to adjust the rates of income and wage taxes for inflation effective January 1981. To compensate for the too high wage tax deductions during 1981 it was decided not to withhold any wage tax in December 1981. This measure together with the usual season purchases in December resulted in a surge of domestic spendings.

The trade sector performed very well and the money received was partly used to redeem outstanding bankloans. Consequently the banks were able to build up substantial liquidity reserves. To invest these reserves profitably, the banks transferred the money abroad. Net foreign investments almost doubled in January.

The banks did not invest any additional money in treasury paper. Mid January an amount of f. 25 million matured which was refinanced for a period of one year at a discount of 8 $\frac{3}{4}$ %. This rate is slightly higher than the previous issue, but still below market rates abroad.

The island governments did not yet spend their money on deposit with the Central Bank and the private banking system. At the end of February they held f. 28,6 million with the Central Bank. The island government of Aruba was even able to increase its balances with the private deposit banks.

Inflation

The level of consumer prices increased only 8.6% during 1981 following the decline in the pace of inflation in the U.S.A. The projection for 1982 may be even lower, since consumer prices grew a mere 0.3% in the U.S.A. during January

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1982. Such a growth corresponds with an annual inflation of only 3.5%.

In general the Netherlands Antilles follow with some time lag the rate recorded in the U.S.A. from where comes most of our imports. The small increase there was mainly the result of a decline in prices of transportation, gasoline, cars and clothes. Food was more expensive.

Shell Curaçao

Shell Curaçao recorded a net profit of f. 13.5 million during 1981 against f. 140 million for the previous year. The profit was a result of losses of commercial activities and windfall profits because of stock revaluations.

The stocks decreased since demand for oil products dropped considerably. The disappointing commercial development was in particular evident during the second half of 1981. The management of the oil refinery did not show many optimistic feelings about the near future.

Shell Curaçao is an important source of employment and the level of its economic activities will decide about the future prosperity of a large part of the population. At the moment the problem of the refinery consists of an overcapacity for its products. The company employs already too many people so no contribution may be expected to alleviate the existing unemployment. In the near future a lot of its employees will retire who will not be replaced.

The future of the refinery will hardly be affected by the financial results of one year. So the small profit of 1981 will certainly not endanger the continuity of the company. The management declared that they are working on the improvement of the existing situation and announced additional upgrading investments. The most important new investment comprises a new thermal cracker II, which will cost about f. 125 million. In 1981 investments were made up to an amount of f. 62 million.

The cash flow is not sufficient to finance the new investments. It will be necessary to borrow the funds on foreign capital markets.

In the past Shell Curaçao was mainly financed through inter-company funding in addition to its own cash flow. However, this year the oil refinery will probably borrow the necessary funds in its own name from outside parties on the international capital market.

Amstel Brewery

The Antillean Brewery (Amstel) showed a profit of f. 1,3 million for its financial year of 1981. During the previous year a profit of f. 1,2 million was recorded. From

this profit an amount of 0.8 million has been retained, to strengthen its financial position. The amount of sales grew from f. 26,4 million to f. 28,4 million. In December 1981 a new collective labour agreement was signed by the Brewery and the labour union for a period of 3 years.

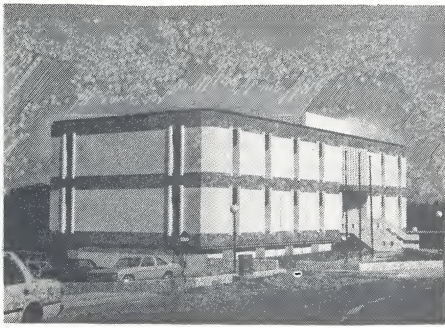
The increase of the U.S. dollar has resulted in an improvement of the Antillean Guilder against the European currencies. These circumstances together with a decrease in the pace of inflation and stabilizing energy prices are reasons for the management to expect that the cost increase in the future will be kept in hand to maintain the existing profitability. ■

table 1. The external cash flow; f. million.

nett amounts.	period January/September		
	1981	1980	change
merchandise	-984,0	-1007,6	23,6
transport	222,4	279,4	- 57,0
tourism	478,2	442,8	44,4
investment income	- 44,3	- 74,9	30,6
offshore taxes	80,1	73,6	6,5
development grants	37,4	36,0	1,4
government	9,9	10,6	0,7
transfers oil ref.	286,3	205,3	81,0
operational exp.	87,4	75,7	11,7
sundry payments	44,3	50,8	6,5
balance current acc.	138,1	- 9,9	148,0
private capital	- 96,4	- 17,4	- 79,0
government capital	32,7	21,8	10,9
increase reserves	74,4	- 5,5	79,9

table 2. Central Bank Condensed balance sheet; f.million.

	28-2-82	31-1-82	31-12-81
gold stock	41,4	41,4	41,4
foreign reserves	233,1	207,7	244,4
loans to:			
- fed. government	89,7	89,8	89,8
- private sector	1,2	1,2	1,2
sundry assets	6,5	6,3	6,2
TOTAL	371,9	346,4	383,0
bank notes	169,0	170,0	176,4
deposits held by:			
- fed. tax collectors	6,7	0,9	3,0
- isl. governments	28,5	27,4	29,4
- banks	54,7	27,4	47,7
- development projects	28,1	30,0	36,7
- private sector	15,7	16,6	17,8
- non residents	0,0	0,1	0,1
money in custody	2,1	2,1	2,1
sundry liabilities	15,0	19,8	17,7
capital and reserves	52,1	52,1	52,1

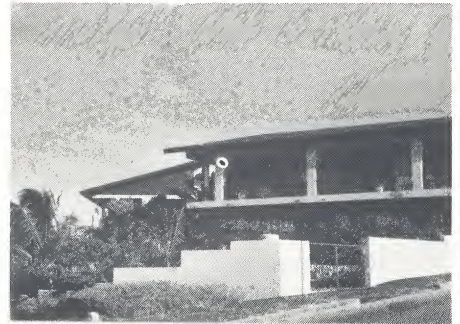


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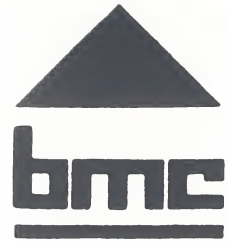


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Town and country planning

by Wim Luiten



Space in Curaçao is being used in a highly inefficient manner. Houses, office and industrial buildings, roads and footpaths are scattered throughout the island in a perfectly haphazard way. The government seems to be able to do little against this inefficient use of land.

A person who owns a parcel of land may do with it very much as he likes. It is true that a licence is required for the construction of a building, but it is nearly impossible to refuse granting this. Moreover, such a building licence contains only very limited stipulations as to the nature of the building. The Government has to stand looking on powerlessly, while valuable agricultural land is being used for building houses, traffic problems are created by unbalanced town expansion and an overabundance of cars, and unique parts of the town are abandoned and go into decay, because people move elsewhere. The Government is the one, however, to be presented with the bill for this liberal policy. It has to provide an expensive public transport system, an extensive road network, as well as renovation of town sections that have fallen into disrepair.

Legal measures

It is slowly being realized in broad circles that we can no longer go on in this way. Space is too scarce and valuable a commodity to continue

handling it in such a careless way. In 1976 the Central Government Town and Country Planning Ordinance was decreed with the objective of putting an end to this development. Based on this Ordinance the Central Government will have to establish a policy for the development of the territory of the Netherlands Antilles. In addition official entities will have to be created to help prepare this government policy. But the main weight of the possibilities to steer this development in a certain direction lies with the insular governments. They can draw up detailed plans and attach thereto stipulations for specific purposes. These stipulations may result in limitations for constructing, demolishing or changing buildings and also for the way these buildings are used.

The insular territory of Curaçao is the first to have produced such a by-law, which, however, has not yet become effective. This is expected to take place soon and then it will be up to the planners and the insular council to determine how drastic the influence of the new by-law will be on society.

Possibilities

These laws can be an important instrument in the hands of the Government. Industries causing a lot of hindrance can be kept out of residential areas. Natural parks and agricultural land can be protected against irresponsible construction.

The Government's influence on the style of the buildings will be much greater, thus preventing ugly and incongruous construction. The monument preservation policy can be carried out more effectively, because the Government will have more tools at its disposal. Unique views of the town can be

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rection and form. The possibilities for application are numerous and the effects of the legislation on society may be manifold.

Vision

Whether the significance of the laws will be as great in practice depends on a number of circumstances.

In the first place there has to be a vision of the desired development. The political and social-economic uncertainties still hanging over our heads do not make it any easier to develop a comprehensive vision of town and country planning.

Furthermore sufficient official support is still lacking.

The official bodies that have to be created according to the Central Government Ordinance are still non-existent and in the opinion of insiders this will presumably remain that way. A third circumstance is the way in which the citizens are going to accept the

limitations on their individual ownership rights. The Central Government Ordinance is based on a typical western European model, in which extensive possibilities to participate in the decision making process and the many ways open for appeal have to legitimize the ownership right.

And an American happens to be more attached to his individual freedom than a European.

Despite these uncertainties — and there are a lot more that can be mentioned — it must be admitted that the laws are an important device to help promote further development of the Antilles. An important piece of legislation is about to become effective. ■

(translated from Dutch.)

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PEOPLE

Visiting all three Windward Islands last February the well-known marine-biologist **Dr. Ingvar Kristensen** made arrangements for the imminent arrival of the not less well-known camera virtuoso Peter Creutzberg and his crew. Mr. Creutzberg will shoot a 45-minute colour picture displaying the exquisite beauty of the three islands both on land and under water. The movie will be used to stimulate awareness amongst the local populations of the riches nature has bestowed upon them in order to forego further waste and pollution. The film is expected to be available to the public later this year.



Photo by R. Snow

Recently arrived in Bonaire to take up his post as a wood products expert **Erhard Werner Naumann**, a United Nations Technical Assistance specialist, has been assigned to Fundashon Arte Industria Bonairiano. This is one of five such crafts foundations in the Netherlands Antilles, a crafts and small enterprise project of the Central Government's Department for Development Cooperation and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Mr. Naumann spent three years in a similar position in St. Kitts in the West Indies in the early 70's as an adviser with the British Overseas

Pará riba bo ruina
mi alma kier a sigui
tra'i biento bagamundo
ma solo moribundo
den un lamá di blou
akompañá'i shinishi
a obligá mi alma
rekobrá su kalma



standing on your ruin
my soul longed to follow
the vagabond wind
but the sun dying
in a sea of blue
infused with grey
forced my soul
to recover its calm.

Earlier this year the gifted **Ernesto Rozenstand** published a small collection of poems of great delicacy, beautifully illustrated by his son A. Rozenstand. One of the 20 poems is reprinted above together with an English translation. Mr. Rozenstand, who works with the Department of Education on Aruba, has contributed greatly during the past years to the cultural life of his island by writing, translating and directing drama.



Maybe a little disheveled by the ever blowing trade winds but certainly set on a decisive course, was **mr. C. N. F. van Ditshuizen**, general manager of the Dutch News Agency ANP, when visiting the Antilles last March. Having overhauled his organization thoroughly since he was appointed to his present job two years ago, van Ditshuizen was now ready to announce a considerable speed-up of the information flow to the Antilles. One important advantage: news selection will soon be shifted from The Hague to the Antillean media.

Development Administration. His present assignment with the International Labour Office (ILO) will be for two years and is his first with a United Nations agency.

From Radley, Oxfordshire in England, Naumann had considerable experience in his profession in

England and Canada. A fishing and water sports enthusiast, he will no doubt feel very much at home in Bonaire and will be joined there by his wife and three children in July.

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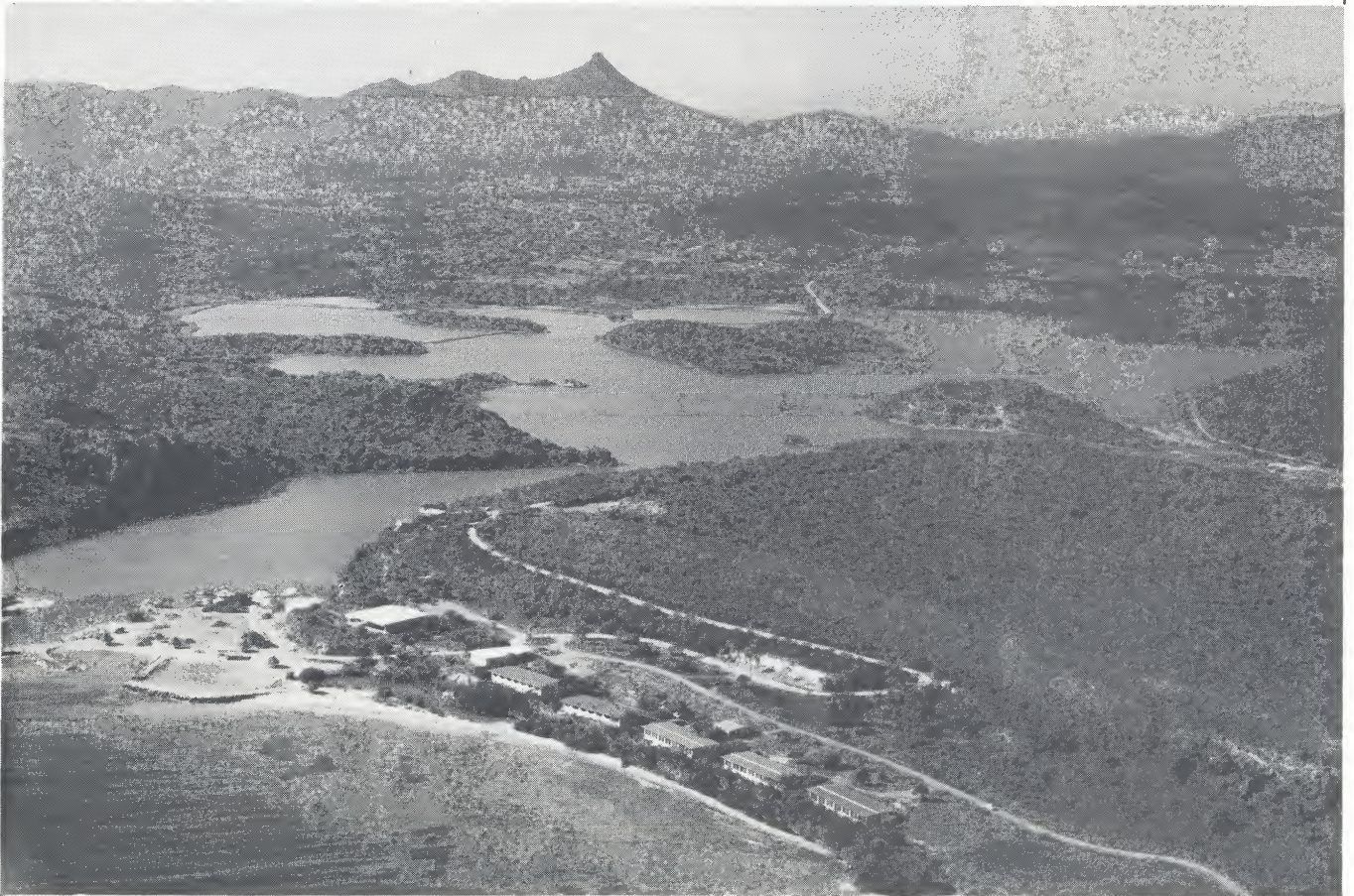
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QUO VADIS



A CRITICAL VIEW

Recently airlines, hoteliers and touristbureaus of the Pacific area, held a meeting in Bangkok under the umbrella of their association PATA (Pacific Area Travel Association).

The purpose was primarily to discuss a serious problem, viz. that a slow economic recovery could bring long distance travel to the Pacific area from North America and Europe to a virtual halt.

Increased airline-fares, a must to keep the airlines in the air, and increased cost for a stay in various countries tend to discourage long distance travel.

From the conference-floor came a strong plea to develop more **regional tourism**, in case Americans and Europeans decide to stay home or at least to arrive in much smaller numbers than before.

It may well be that our islands and perhaps the Caribbean Tourist Association as well will have to put this matter on their agenda.

In spite of the optimistic sounds uttered by Antilleans working for and in the tourist-industry about the results of their visits to the vacation-markets in Holland (January) and in Berlin (March) we are far from optimistic.

The special fare offered by the KLM on the route from Amsterdam is a help, but the high international fares applicable to Germans and other European are a serious drawback.

Moreover the hotel rates remain high especially in the winter season. Add to this the high price of meals in hotels and a lot of people

who dream of a far away vacation, are scared off.

Recently the company responsible for Curaçao-promotion in the USA announced its advertising campaign for 1982. The theme suggested is "The most dependable island vacation in the Caribbean right now in Curaçao". The budget: In excess of 1 million dollars.

The promotion will feature:

- Secluded beaches
- Sporting life
- European Charm
- International Cuisine
- Entertainment
- Shopping

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Are these the ingredients which make Curaçao so different from other islands in the Caribbean?

Are our secluded beaches so clean and so safe?

Can people find the roads leading there?

And how about the sporting life?

How good are the facilities for golfing, boat rentals, fishing etc.?

And in the field of entertainment . . .

Are a few crowded casino's and a singer in a few nightclubs the entertainment which will make Curaçao more desirable than other islands?

The agency in charge of promotion says to be convinced that nowadays people should go to Curaçao because people want dependability, safety, friendliness, good food and a wide selection of vacation ac-

tivities. They are also convinced that visitors will receive value for their dollar spent, that they will enjoy friendliness, reliability, good climate, watersports, english-speaking people in a charming and hassle-free environment.

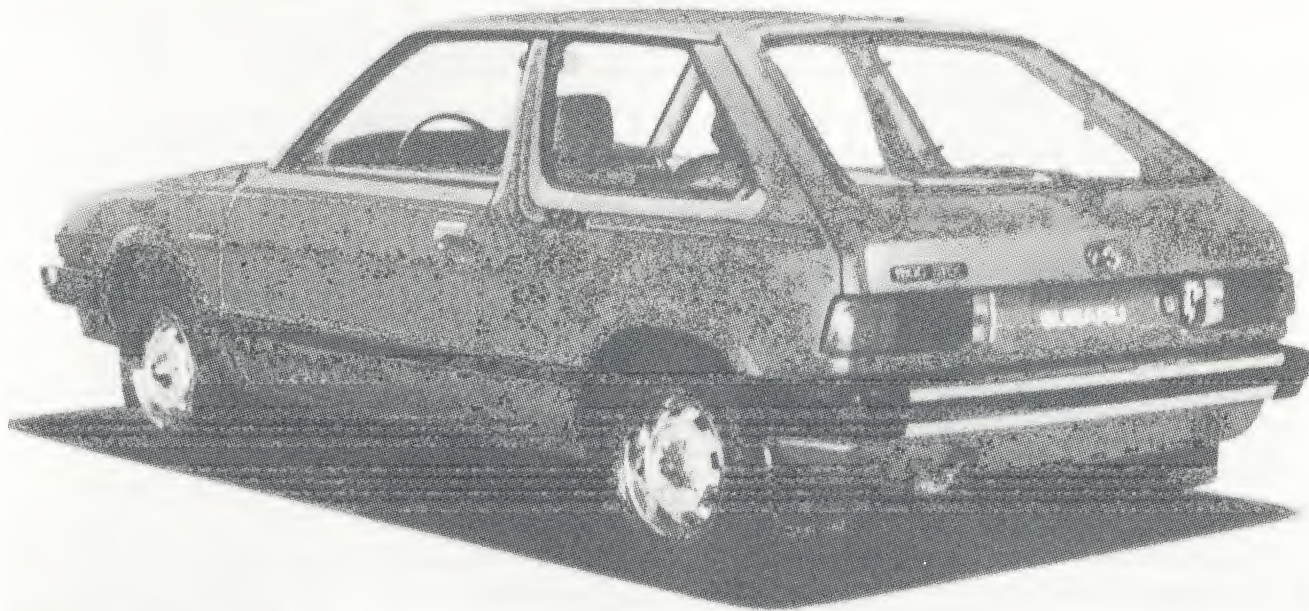
At this point we have to ask ourselves a number of serious questions:

1. Is it wise to spend such enormous amounts on promotion without relatively doing anything to upgrade the product itself.?
2. Is it wise to spend about \$ 1000 per hotel room available on the island on **one market**, from which hardly any increase in traffic can be expected because of the economic situation?
3. Should not more money be spent in markets from which more visitors can be attracted such as Trinidad, Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru? (The **regional tourism** which was the theme of the PATA-meeting).

And finally wouldn't it have been a good idea to extend the celebration of the 250th anniversary of "Mikvé Israel" into a number of events during the entire 1982, in close co-operation with the Jewish community?

Having the oldest synagogue in the Western Hemisphere might draw more visitors than the rather questionable sporting-facilities on the island, just to name one of the features propagated.

Curaçao Tourist Board and Tourist-industry please wake up and ask yourselves "Quo Vadis" or rather "Quo vamos". ■



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Volunteers battle cancer

by Joan de Windt

In a vast number of countries, including the Netherlands Antilles, cancer has become the second cause of death. A disturbing development, which because the causes of the disease are still unknown, demands an all out effort to inform the public about what is known in order to limit its devastating impact as much as possible. Treatment has a much better chance of being effective when applied at an early stage.

Supplying that much needed information is the express purpose of Curaçao's Princess Wilhelmina Foundation (PWF). Says its president Diana Capriles: "Our principal goal is obtaining and passing on information on cancer to the people of Curaçao. Because when dealing with a disease of this nature, prevention is of vital importance". No less important are the Foundation's efforts to raise money in order to assist people who cannot afford the extremely expensive treatment of the disease.

The Foundation was established in 1949 at the occasion of the abdication of Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands. Contributions by the Curçao community to give the Queen a present, resulted in an amount far beyond expectations. The retiring Queen gladly agreed to having the money put into a fund bearing her name and aimed at assisting cancer patients needing financial aid. First president of the PWF was Mrs. Sarah Correa. The Foundation, which has presently 14 ladies serving on its board, has during the past years broadened its scope, now also aiming at prevention, the alleviation of suffering brought on by the disease, and its aftermath.

Prevention

Cancer originates with the genesis of one malignant cell, which splitting itself multiplies, thus forming a tumor. These cells either nestle in the surrounding tissue or detaching themselves move through the lymphatic or blood system to other parts of the body. There every individual cell can multiply itself again. If not destroyed the resulting malignant growth will eventually cause death.

If cancer is detected at an early stage i.e. when malignant cells are still few, small and concentrated in



Diana Capriles

one part of the body, removal will be easier and nearly always successful. Reason why Mrs. Capriles and her lady members of the Foundation give high priority to spreading information on how to prevent or detect the disease. One of the methods used is lecturing to schools and women-groups teaching participants how to examine their own bodies.

The Foundation has close contact with the American Cancer Society,

which regularly forwards materials concerning the latest progress made in the battle against this tough enemy. These materials are then passed on to physicians, interested or specialized in this field, and to the hospital library. The general public is kept informed by way of brochures in the local language (Papiamentu).

The Foundation recently financed a number of 30-second spots on radio and TV using the format of mini-interviews in which physicians discussed cancer.

Special attention is also given to the detection of breast cancer. Women and girls are taught methods of self-examination practising on a specially designed prosthesis.

Fundraising

The main purpose of the foundation, however, is to raise funds. Each year in September sixty volunteers set out to collect money from the public. Says Mrs. Capriles "the co-operation we get from the community is impressive. We collect from street to street and from shop to shop. We even have permission to collect in churches".

In 1981 the amount raised was approximately Naf 100,000.—, enabling the Foundation to continue assisting patients with little means of their own. Doctors and social workers often pass on to the Foundation cases that need help. As x-ray treatment can only be obtained in nearby Caracas (Ven) much of the help goes towards paying for travel and lodging costs.

Tells Diana Capriles "sometimes we are asked to pay for a pair of pyjamas, since Health Insurance only pays for treatment and not for extra's. We were once asked to ▶

INDEX

Tumors most frequently occurring in the Netherlands Antilles. From a study by Dr. S. C. Freni, pathologist.

Ratio: 1 : 100.000

Men		Women	
Lung	98	Breast	153
Stomach	85	Cervix	100
Prostate	82	Skin	69
Gullet	53	Stomach	49
		Gullet	39

These are the only figures available in Curaçao!

help out with supplying a wig for a gentleman who had undergone radiation treatment and lost his hair as a result. This manner of assistance may not seem very important, but it does go a long way in helping people to overcome psychological side-effects.

The funds raised have also been used to provide St. Elisabeth Hospital with highly needed equipment. Last year an "Ultrasound", a tumor detecting device, was donated.

Smoke-out

Another activity of the Foundation is to organize a yearly awareness campaign. This year's effort will be directed against smoking, a major cause of cancer. Special stickers and posters have been designed showing a skull smoking a cigarette. The subscription reads 'djies sigui huma numa', which means something like: just you keep on smoking!

The PWF also has in mind to organize a so called 'smoke-out'. Diana explains: "the idea is to get people to stop smoking for one day. Maybe if they find out that they can do so quite easily, they will kick off the habit altogether. If not they will at least have gained one day".

Smoke-outs are being held in the USA every year. last year TV per-

sonality J. R. from the famous Dallas production led the campaign.

"We have asked a well known promotor in our own community to do the same", continues Diana Capriles, "but as he himself appears in commercials recommending certain brands of cigarettes he could not possibly do this!" In spite of this set-back and the fact that a lot of professionalism will be needed to organize such a campaign properly, PWF's president is still hopeful that the campaign will be held this year.

Traumatic

"A patient who had undergone mastectomy (breast removal) once reproached us for only offering material help." Mrs. Capriles tells that ever since attention has been given to women who pass through this traumatic experience. "Whenever we hear of a woman undergoing such an operation, we send a volunteer to the hospital, a woman who has gone through the same experience. She will talk to the patient from her own experience, show her how to use a prosthesis and what kind of exercises to do". Such patients, mrs. Capriles explains, form a very special group with their own problems. They not only have to face the pain and difficulty of moving their arms and shoulder again, but also suffer the feeling of no longer belonging, a

fear of being no longer acceptable to their husbands and friends. These women are in need of moral support and reassurance.

It should be noted that of all different types of cancer, breast cancer is the one that occurs most amongst women. Besides offering counseling on a volunteer basis — Mrs. Capriles would very much like to obtain the services of a professional social worker for this purpose — the Foundation has also published a translation of the American Cancer Society's booklet 'Reach out and recover'. Last year April, moreover, the PWF started a prosthesis bank. Asked if there is much demand for this kind of help, mrs. Capriles answers: "You'd be amazed. In the short time the bank has been operational already fifty prostheses have been handed out!"

As can be read from the index, cancer does occur at a relatively high rate in the Netherlands Antilles. Pathologist S. G. Freni states in a report that breast cancer is the most often occurring malignant tumor amongst women in the Antilles. The figure is so alarmingly high that it puts the country on almost the same level as the high cancer risk nations of the world. A shocking revelation which underlines the enormous importance of the Princess Wilhelmina Foundation's endeavours. ■

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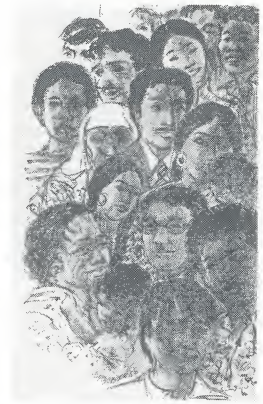
STA. ROSAWEG 133 - CURACAO

Caribbean Migration to the Netherlands

From the elite to the working class

by Frank Bovenkerk

(Reprinted in abbreviated form from Caribbean Review)



Two years prior to Suriname's gaining political independence in 1975, emigration to the Netherlands reached a peak of 30,000 people a year. A newspaper reporter at the arrival gate of Schiphol Airport was bewildered by the enormous variety of people entering the country. These people didn't fit into the immigration categories the Dutch were used to. The reporter, expecting to write about young, colorfully-dressed lower-class black males, which was the typical vision the Dutch had of Surinamers, had to change his plans.

Instead, what he saw were large Hindustani families headed by slim dark-eyed peasants and elderly women dressed in pastel colors and white shawls; flamboyant Creole mothers surrounded by children; people of Javanese descent (something one might have expected 20 years earlier when thousands of Eurasians fled to the Netherlands from the Dutch East Indies); Chinese, Bush negroes (as Maroons were still called in Holland), Lebanese and even a South American Indian. The reporter decided to interview a random sample and soon discovered that the immigrants had come from all levels of society. They were urban-proletariat, peasants, middle class as well as well-to-do civil servants and businessmen. How could such an enormous wave of people of such incredible diversity come from such a small and simple country (population 400,000)? The Dutch had always considered Suriname to be a provincial corner

of their dwindling colonial empire and very few people in the Netherlands were aware of the population diversity of Suriname; a diversity that has resulted from the constant importing of new laborers to its plantation economy. The poor newspaperman was confronted with a cross-section of the Surinamese population come to Holland during the "ripening" stage of the migration process. The complex composition of this emigrant group cannot be understood properly without a thorough knowledge of its history.

The Dutch Caribbean

Emigration from Suriname and the Netherlands Antilles (Curaçao, Aruba, Bonaire and three of the smaller Leeward Islands) began in a manner similar to that of all colonial Caribbean societies. The children of the elite (white first and then mulatto) were sent to the mother countries to be properly educated in Europe. Some of them returned, others stayed. This movement began about two centuries ago and is still going on. In 1982 more than 2,000 Surinamers and Antillians are attending institutions of higher learning in the Netherlands. Those who returned now constitute the administrative and business elites of Suriname and the Netherlands Antilles. Those who stayed became university professors, physicians, high school teachers and so on. This kind of non-return of professionals is one form of brain drain. Today more Surinamers are practicing physicians in the Nether-

lands than in Suriname.

For more than a century, the people of Suriname and the Netherlands Antilles have been convinced of the necessity of going to Holland if one was really to advance socially. This was more so for Surinamers; for Antillians, studying in the United States had become an alternative of equal merit. **Ever since Curaçao and Aruba have housed American-owned oil refineries (since the '20s and '30s),** Antillian cultural orientation had been divided between the Netherlands and the United States. Emigration from the Netherlands Antilles to the Netherlands had always remained minor in comparison with Suriname. The number of Surinamers in Holland is now estimated at 180,000; the number of Antillians at 30,000.

Returnees generally give an enthusiastic account of the Netherlands. If they don't they are simply not believed. "You tell me such bad things because you don't want me to go eh?" There was, of course, a strong basis of reality in their optimistic account, especially during the '60s once the Netherlands became a welfare state. Returning migrants were reinforcing the favorable attitude toward the mother country created by witnessing the obvious wealth of the Dutch in Suriname and by studying with the missionaries who taught Dutch geography and history in the schools.

After the Second World War, emigration from the Dutch Caribbean exhibited only small in- ▶

creases. During the early '60's, however, people from a much broader class basis began to participate. Dutch, Surinamese and Antillian social scientists have speculated a great deal about how this sudden enlargement of the old colonial migration pattern came about. A first explanation is simply that the Surinamese upper-classes expanded. A short economic boom during the war (1942-45) owing to the exploitation of Suriname's bauxite for the American war industry, had enabled people of new social classes to emigrate to the Netherlands. It was no longer only the doctors, lawyers, managers and high civil servants who sent their children to Europe, a (mainly Creole) group of school teachers, middle-ranked administrators and nurses left the country as well. This argument does not quite explain the rather sudden rise in numbers, nor the fact that a new category of skilled laborers participated in the migration process.

Capitalism

A second interpretation is popular among politically left-wing Surinamese circles in the Netherlands. They hold that the development of post-war capitalism is responsible for the recruitment of cheap labor from its colonies or former colonies. Hadn't the emigration from the British West Indies to the United Kingdom been triggered by the deliberate recruitment of cheap labor for British industry? During the late '50s and up until 1963 a small number of Dutch industrial firms did indeed send recruitment officers to Suriname to bring some one hundred skilled workers back to Holland. This experiment, however, ended in disaster. The firms' management seems to have made every possible mistake introducing their new employees and their white workers protested strongly. After much trouble, Dutch industry lost interest in Suriname and started to recruit cheap labor of a far

more submissive type from the Mediterranean area.

Italians, Spaniards and later on especially Turks and Moroccans were viewed as being more profitable. These Mediterranean *gastarbeiders* ("guest workers") were recruited on a one-year basis and could be laid off and sent home when economic expansion slowed down. The Mediterranean labor force was supposed to function as a buffer in the economic cycle. Surinamers and Antillians were far less easy to deal with since they were Dutch citizens which entitled them to the same rights as anybody else. This explanation in terms of direct capitalist exploitation made more sense applied to migrants from Curaçao and Aruba. For one reason or another, the employment of Antillians was more successful than that of Surinamese labor. It only came to a halt at the end of the '60s, when the number of skilled workers in Curaçao interested in going to the Netherlands dwindled.

Although labor recruitment for Dutch industry has been quantitatively negligible, its psychological effect was not. The possibility of emigration to the Netherlands came within the horizon of new groups. Emigration was no longer a prerogative for the upper classes alone. From the mid-'60s on, the Surinamese establishment in the Netherlands, a group of successfully assimilated Surinamers, began to protest. The migration of the lower social classes was viewed as a threat to their position.

Less inclined

The question has been posed as to why so few Antillians leave for Holland. A special social science research project has been carried out to shed light on this intriguing question. Many of the explanatory factors for Surinamese emigration also hold true for Curaçao, Aruba and the other Dutch Antillian islands. They have a population of 250,000, the **unemployment rate is equally high, salaries are much**

lower than in Holland and the system of social benefits, although better than in Suriname, is inferior to that in the Netherlands. Why do the Antillians exhibit such negligible willingness to emigrate? A first explanation has to do with **Antillian cultural identity. The atmosphere there is more cosmopolitan than in Suriname, and the national culture is less exclusively oriented to the mother country.** Second, **the Netherlands Antilles are not a multiracial society in the political sense** that Suriname is. There are no Hindustani or Javanese. The major political cleavage of the present-day Netherlands Antilles is between Aruba and the rest, but up until now this has not resulted in mass emigration.

What can be said about return migration from the Netherlands? Antillians have a relatively high rate of return. Return migration is not an issue of debate among them. This is quite different from the case of the Surinamese immigrants. With the exception of a brief period just before and after Suriname gained independence, in the past 15 years their rate of return migration has never been high. It has now sunk to under 1% a year. Surprisingly enough, no single topic is so widely and thoroughly discussed by Surinamers in Holland as the moral and political obligation to repatriate. It is an ideological issue embracing the wish to maintain ties with the native country, and it makes the trials and tribulations of immigration endurable. The by now exhausted reporter we met before can no longer be found at Schiphol Airport, he is now writing a newspaper series on the integration of Surinamers into the Netherlands society. ■

*Frank Bovenkerk teaches sociology at the University of Utrecht in Holland. His latest book, **Practische en Ethische Problemen van Sociaal Onderzoek**, is in press. A previous book, **The Sociology of Return Migration**, was published by Martinus Nijhoff in 1974.*

Looking back in anger

*former dutch representative
lashes out*

Boven de wind en onder de gordel.
by Bart Bredero

Enlarged edition printed by
Offset Drukkerij Montero. Naf. 9.90

"Dutch development aid has always been somewhat of a mixture of casualness and opportunism. And maybe a tiny bit of idealism". Even though his book is written in heavily romantic overtones, Bart Bredero has launched a heavy, "j'accuse", the sarcastic undertone of which is increasingly stirring the conscience of the Dutch. To illustrate the haphazardness of the Dutch development policy he reminds his interviewer of the fact that in the days when Surinam was still a partner in the Kingdom, the amount available for development assistance for 'the West' was simply divided in two, one part going to the Antilles and the other to Surinam. "A ludicrous decision, which showed little insight and re-

spect for the receiving countries. And most of that money ultimately benefited Dutch businessmen". Having served as Holland's representative for Development Co-operation both in Surinam and the Antilles, Bredero has a first hand knowledge of his subject. He realizes fully well that no-one will be deeply shocked on hearing that Dutch aid is tinged with a fair percentage of self interest. But Bredero does feel that the world should be informed about what he calls 'the fast buck business' and the 'extra dimension'. In his booklet, which is more or less a collection of letters he wrote to his friends in Holland during the late sixties and early seventies, Bredero indicates — unfortunately he

does no more than that — widespread abuse of development funds. He accuses the Dutch parliament of neglecting its controlling task. In the construction business, he claims, prices were often inflated in the case of development projects. He is convinced that far more could have been done with less money.

It should be noted that Bredero does not belong to that brand of critics who voice their displeasure after they have left the job and landed safely elsewhere. In fact his courageous stand against corruption cost him his job as a representative of the Netherlands. Although all island territories and a score of foundations and organizations in the Antilles protested ►

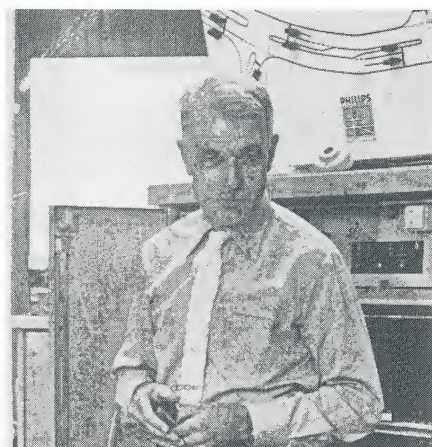


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his dismissal in 1975, the Dutch government turned a deaf ear. This, it must be said, does raise some questions.

Central in his accusing writings is his denunciation of Holland's hypocrisy with regard to the casino business. During his term in office 30-40 million guilders were allocated to stimulate tourism. Most of that money went to the construction of hotels including casino's. In that time, he reminds his readers, casino's were an anathema in the Netherlands themselves. Bredero is deeply worried about the demoralizing influence this type of entertainment has had and is still having on the local population. For although strict regulations forbidding locals to participate were drawn up, they were never applied as intended. Bredero feels strongly about this. And when he says that the money could have been used for more constructive projects in a development sense, he does seem to have a point. His strongest point, however, seems to be that Holland considers development aid too often as a tool to realize and serve its own interests. Bredero's book is not only worthwhile reading with regard to the past but also as a warning for the present in which the Netherlands seem prone to use 'aid' as a leverage to force their will upon the Antilles in a political sense. ■

Mi koto di kuenta (My basket of tales)

Adriana Kleinmoedig-Eustatia

Published by the department of Culture in its programme of conservation of folkloric heritage. The first volume contains folk tales. The second volume has yet to be published. On sale in the regular book stores for f. 8.-.

De prinses van Zweelo (the princess of Zweelo)

Miep Diekmann.

A completely revised 1981 edition of the book "Een mens te kort" (Short one person) which was published in 1957. Published by Leopold, 1981.

Regresso (Return) A volume of stories. A romantic voyage through the past in novel form. Evento; historia y personahe. Events; history and personalities) An account of the author's personal interest in the past.

Punto di vista (Points of view). The author's personal view of current affairs.

Jossy Mansur.

All three booklets were published in papiamento by Imprenta Nacional.

Het St. Elisabeth Hospitaal te Curaçao in West-Indië 1855-1972. (St. Elisabeth Hospitaal in Curaçao in the West-Indies 1855-1972)

Chris Engels.

Published posthumously. Doctoral-thesis. From the construction of a new hospital to general health insurance, to mention but two examples of the book's contents. Published by Meulenhoff.

Yomi Yomi.

Diana Lebacs.

Contains rhymes based on the Antillean alphabet.

Mi buki di bestia (My animal book)

Pierre Lauffer.

The book deals with animals. Illustrated.

Bida na kolo (Life in colour)

Carel de Haseth.

Inspired by paintings of J. M. Capricorne. Translated by J. M. Eustatia. The volume has been written exclusively for the Foundation for The Mentally Handicapped and is not on sale.

Ki ba kere. (What did you think)

Yerba Seku.

A sound-cassette containing 18 poems published by the author Yerba Seku (Richard Hooi) himself.

Illusies sterven (Illusions die)

Published by Tamaris Universal, Curaçao Neth. Antilles. f 7.50.

De Huurcommissieregeling (The Rent-commission regulation) Edited by H. Th. Lopez. Published by De Wit Stores, L. G. Smith Boulevard 110, Oranjestad, Aruba. f. 20.-.

Study Guide 1981-1982, University of the Netherlands Antilles, P.O.B. 682, Willemstad, Curaçao. ■



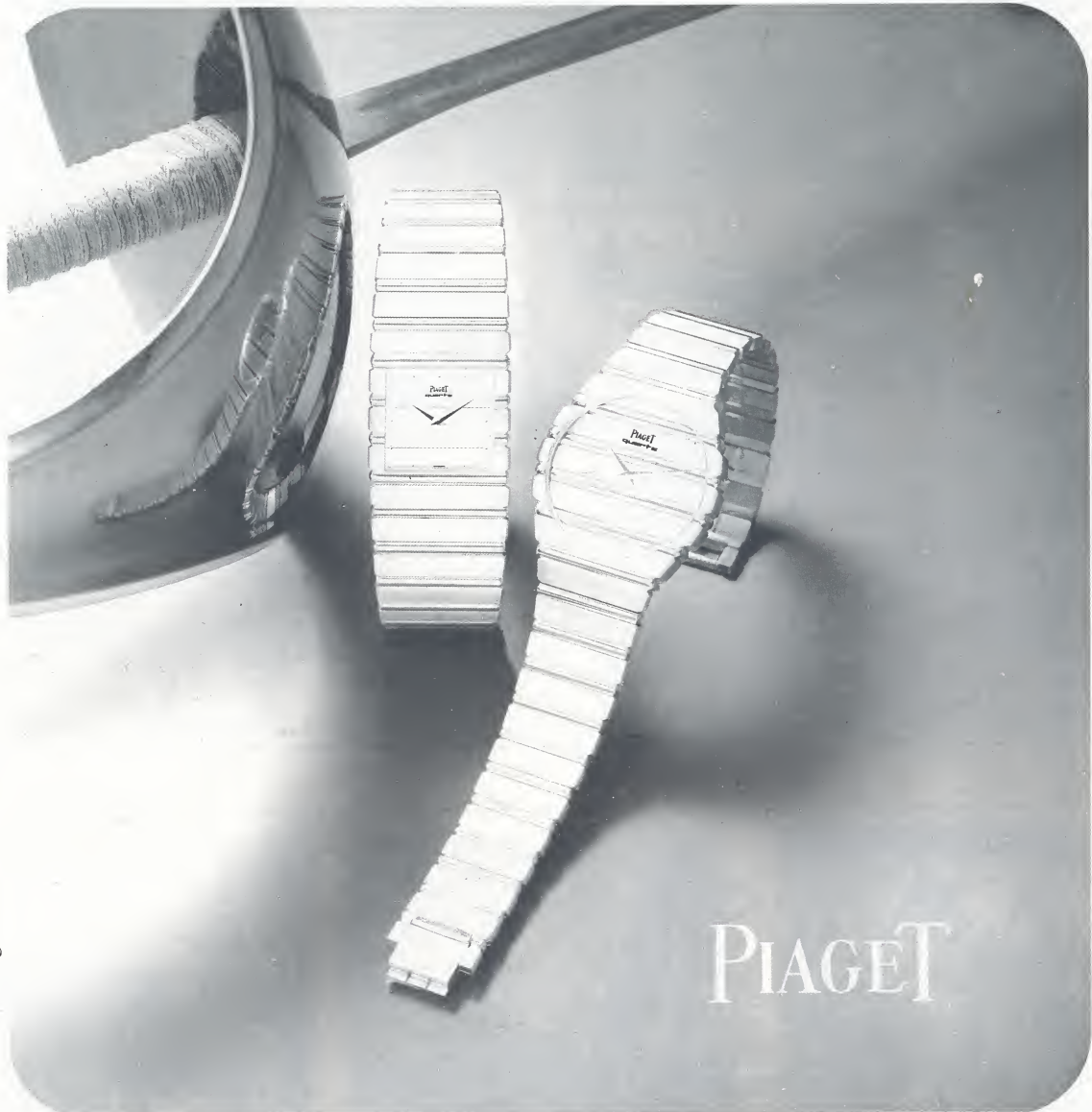
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